Irish Deaf Society

Further Education and Training

Quality Assurance Manual

30th June 2025

deaf.ie

Contents

Acronyms used in this document

AI	Artificial Intelligence
BLFOL	Blended Learning and Fully Online Learning
CDS	Centre of Deaf Studies, Trinity College of Dublin
CDS	Centre for Deaf Studies
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
DAC	Deaf Adults Courses
DALS	Deaf Adult Literacy Services
DVI	Deaf Village Ireland
EA	External Authentication
EE	External Evaluator
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages
ETB	Education & Training Board
EUD	European Union of the Deaf
FESS	Further Education Support Service
FET	Further Education and Training
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
HoH	Hard of Hearing
HR	Human Resources
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IDS	Irish Deaf Society
ISL	Irish Sign Language

ISLA	Irish Sign Language Academy
IV	Internal Verification
L&D	Learning and Development
LMS	Learning Management Systems
NFQ	National Framework of Qualifications
PEL	Protected of Enrolled Learners
PLSS	Programme Learners Support System
QAC	Quality Assurance Committee
QAM	Quality Assurance Manager
QAS	Quality Assurance Systems
QBS	Qualifications Business System
QQI	Quality and Qualifications Ireland
RAP	Results Approval Panel
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
SEP	Self- Evaluation Panel
SOLAS	The Irish National Further Education and Training Authority
UDL	Universal Design for Learners
WFD	World Federation of the Deaf

Terms & Definitions

Further Education (FE): the education of people who are adult learners in Level 1- 6 of the National Framework of Qualification which leads to progression and access to further education and employment.

Face-to-Face Learning: (onsite) Face-to-face learning is defined as classroom-based delivery where a set period of time is spent with our teaching staff for teaching, discussions, and workshops.

Synchronous Online Learning: Teachers and learners gathering at the same time and virtual place and interacting in “real-time”

Asynchronous Online Learning: Learners accessing online materials at their own pace and interacting with their teacher and peers at times that work around other commitments

Blended Learning: A combination of in-person and online learning and assessment integrating synchronous and asynchronous elements through a Learning Management System (LMS).

Continuous Professional Development: Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and is the term used to describe the learning activities professionals engage in to improve, develop, and enhance their skills.

Programme Learners Support System (PLSS): A management information system maintained by SOLAS. It is a FET data system to manage learner and course information providing key statistics on FET outputs and outcomes.

QQI Business System (QBS): A QQI certification platform to submit learners' results data for certification and a direct link to education and training providers’ validated programmes.

Learning Management Systems (LMS): A Learning Management System is software used for tracking, documenting, reporting, automating, and delivering educational online courses. The systems are designed to use reporting and analytical data to identify lapses in learning and training programs.

Programme Learners Support System (PLSS) A management information system maintained by SOLAS. It is a FET data system to manage learner and course information providing key statistics on FET outputs and outcomes.

Universal Design for Learners (UDL) is a set of principles for curriculum development that give all individuals equal opportunities to learn, including learners with disabilities.

Introduction

(I) Background and Context

The Irish Deaf Society (IDS) has been delivering Further and Education Training since 1998, marking over two decades of service. At the time of its launch, many adults in the Deaf community had been badly impacted by oralism, a widely used educational approach during their school years in the 1970s and 1980s that discouraged the use of sign language.

This now discredited method dominated schools in Ireland from 1940s through the 1980s, as it did in many other countries in the early 20th century, where the use of sign language in education was actively suppressed in education settings. [see, for example, *Information Provision and Access to Public and Social Services for the Deaf Community,* Citizens Information Board, December 2017, p2 and the extensive bibliography on the history of ISL in Appendix 2 of that publication].

As a result, much of the knowledge delivered transmitted in the classroom through English was lost and not accessible to Deaf students, leading to significant gaps in their education. Many left school without the necessary skills or qualifications, which made it difficult to gain employment and often force them to live below the poverty line. In survey's conducted during the 1990's, over 90% of deaf learners stated that they would like to receive education through Irish Sign language (ISL) if given access to second chance education. *[Cultural awareness note: the word "Deaf" with a capital letter D in the spelling is used when referring to those who identify with the Deaf community, whereas the word "deaf" with a lower-case d refers to deaf people who may not identify themselves as part of the Deaf community].*

A similar approach banning the use of sign language was taken in many other European countries during the late 19th and 20th centuries, following what the Deaf community regard as the infamous Milan Conference on Education of the Deaf in 1880. This conference passed a resolution banning the use of sign language in the education of deaf children, with disastrous consequences. [*Information Provision and Access to Public and Social Services for the Deaf Community,* p2.] Since the 1990's, IDS FET has made an enormous contribution to redressing the educational disadvantage of the Deaf community, but that Citizens Information Board Report highlights that much work remains to be undertaken.

The Report highlights that many Deaf people have markedly lower fluency in English compared to the hearing population, (as ISL is their first language of the Deaf community, and English is a second language). As a result, they often have low self-confidence in their communications with the public in English. In addition, the socio-economic profile of Deaf and Hard of Hearing people indicates lower rates of employment compared with the hearing community. Young Deaf adults are highly critical of the lack of ISL interpreting services, which hinders their ability to access and participate in vocational training and employment opportunities [ibid p2]

IDS FET now offers and provides courses to meet the needs of various groups, including the 5,000 members of the Deaf community, the 50,000 members of the hearing community who use ISL in family, community, social and employment settings, and members of the wider community who are interested in learning the language. IDS FET aims to respond to the on-going changing needs of learners in its FET provision. The passing into law of the Irish Sign Language Act in December 2020, recognising ISL as Ireland's third official language, was a significant milestone for the Deaf community. As a result, public bodies are now obliged by law to provide an interpreting service for the Deaf community when requested. This presents further challenges and opportunities for IDS FET to provide ISL classes to public bodies and private sector that wants to ensure their staff can meet the needs of Deaf clients and collaborate effectively with Deaf employees.

A quick review of the achievements of IDS FET over the past 20 years indicates the contribution it has made. In the 1990's, the need for literacy classes for Deaf adults was acknowledged, leading to the creation of the Linkup Project in 1998, an initiative aimed at providing literacy classes for deaf women. In 2000, this project was extended for another five years under the government's National Development Plan (NDP) and was expanded to provide literacy education to both Deaf women and men, on a national basis.

In 2005, the Linkup Project was replaced by the Deaf Adult Literacy Service (DALS) which not only continue to offer literacy classes but also provided an advocacy service aimed at promoting independent decision making, without having to depend on others for assistance. In October 2012, DALS relocated to the Deaf Village Ireland (DVI) complex, which allowed the service to expand its student capacity.

At the same time, the Irish Sign Language Academy (ISLA) was established in 2006 as a department in the IDS. {see The IDS ISL Academy Operational Plan, April 2008, p1} This grew by the increasing demand for ISL classes in the wider community. ISLA aimed to create a professional network for ISL teachers and other Deaf professionals, develop course curricula and assessment for courses and ISL courses, and advocate for legal recognition for ISL. It made a significant contribution to Deaf education in the following ten years. Following the passing of the ISL Act in 2017, DALS and ISLA merged to form IDS FET as it exists today.

In October 2008, IDS was approved as a FETAC Centre and by 2013 it had validated programmes offering minor awards in ISL1 FETAC Level 3, ISL2 FETAC Level 4, Computer Literacy Level 3, Digital Photography Level 3, Irish Level 3, and the Major Award in General Learning Level 3. By 2015, it had expanded to include General Learning Level 4, and Information and Technology Skills Level 4. Achieving these awards is a significant challenge for many Deaf learners, given that all these courses are taught through ISL and the legacy of fluency challenges in English for many Deaf adults as highlighted earlier in the present document. Most IDS FET teachers are Deaf and deliver training through ISL, while hearing teachers are also fluent in ISL and also teach through ISL. For approximately 70% of IDS Deaf learners English is a second language with ISL being the native language. As with learning any second language, gaining and become fluency in English presents many challenges.

Recently, in 2023, IDS further expanded its offerings with the validation of minor QQI ISL Level 5, providing greater access and transfer opportunities for learners learning ISL.

Here is the timeline of key achievements and developments of IDS FET:

1990s: Recognition of the need for literacy classes for Deaf adults.

1998: Following the Education Act 1998, Section on support services, the establishment of the Linkup Project to provide literacy classes for Deaf women.

2000: The Linkup Project is extended for another five years under the government's National Development Plan and expanded to include both Deaf women and men on a national scale.

2005: The Linkup Project is replaced by the Deaf Adult Literacy Service (DALS), which offers literacy classes, and an advocacy service focused on fostering independent decision-making.

2008: IDS becomes a FETAC Centre. By 2013, it offers minor awards in: ISL1 (Level 3), ISL2 (Level 4), Computer Literacy (Level 3), Digital Photography (Level 3), Irish (Level 3), Major Award in General Learning (Level 3)

2012: DALS relocates to the new state-of-the art complex at Deaf Village Ireland (DVI), allowing it to double its student capacity.

2015: Approved courses expanded to include, General Learning (Level 4), Information and Communications Technology Skills (Level 4).

2016: Establishment of the Irish Sign Language Academy (ISLA) as a department of IDS, responding to the growing demand for ISL classes. ISLA aims to create a professional network for ISL teachers, develop course curricula, and advocate for legal recognition of ISL.

2017: Following the passing of the ISL Act, DALS and ISLA merge to form IDS FET in its current form.

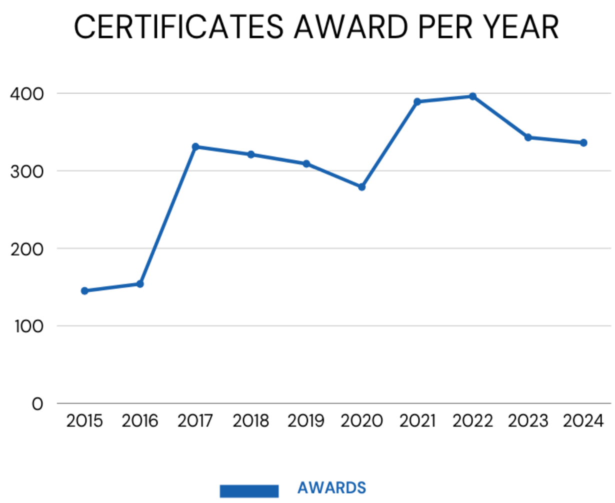
2020: Commence Delivery Blended and Online programmes to support Deaf and hearing learners during COVID-19.

2023: QQI ISL Level 5 introduced, opening further pathways for ISL learners.

This timeline reflects the progressive development of initiatives aimed at improving education and services for the Deaf community in Ireland.

Provider Certificates Awards per Year (QQI infographics)

2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
145	154	331	321	309	279	389	396	343	336



In addition to offering QQI ISL Level 3 and 4, IDS FET provides a variety of programmes for Deaf and Hard of Hearing adults, including ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) QQI L3 & 4, Digital Photography QQI L3 & 4, Self-certified ISL Linguistics for Deaf Adults, Introduction to Counselling and Psychotherapy, Driving Theory for Driving Test, Caring for Family Members, French, Spanish, Irish, Gardening, Irish Deaf History, Genealogy, Environmental Sustainability, and Arts & Crafts.

These programmes aim to address the identified personal, interpersonal, and social needs of Deaf adults, and SOLAS fully supports the provisions for Deaf adults, who in some cases, prioritise the achievement of the new skills rather than certification.

Parallel to the provision of courses for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Adults, IDS has a significant provision of QQI Level 3 and 4 courses for hearing adults. This is fully aligned to the mission of IDS FET, as the more hearing people who learn and use ISL, the greater the benefits for the Deaf community. Many family members, friends and social contacts of Deaf people all aspire to learn ISL. In addition, employers of Deaf adults often provide training in ISL learning for their work colleagues and many Special Needs Assistants in schools pursue qualifications in ISL to support their work with Deaf children in the classroom. With the introduction of the Irish Sign Language Act in December 2020, public bodies have legal responsibilities to provide an ISL interpreting service for clients, and this has increased the demand for IDS ISL classes. Furthermore, the campaign for official recognition of ISL has raised awareness among the public that ISL is an important part of Irish culture and heritage, one of only two languages unique to Ireland, which has also led to an increase in demand for ISL classes.

IDS' FET primary mode of delivery is face-to-face, and since March 2020 due to COVID-19 pandemic, IDS, as with many providers were forced to move its programme delivery online. This format has remained in place at the IDS, as permitted by QQI.

In response to this, IDS has developed its own internal set of practices, informed by QQI's blended learning guidelines. A Learning Management System (LMS) was created to support the delivery of IDS programmes both at the time and future provisions.

This shift has significantly changed how courses are delivered, allowing for greater outreach and encouraging innovative approaches to online learning. As a result, there has been an increased investment in a robust LMS to support evolving teaching and learning needs.

(ii) Mission Statement

The IDS seeks to achieve and promote the Equality and Rights of Deaf people in Ireland. On the grounds of the Irish Constitution and Human Rights and International legislation, the ambition of full access to citizenship and society is sought through the empowerment and mobilisation of the Deaf community. With an awareness of their identity and their rights as individuals, Deaf people in Ireland are enabled to celebrate their culture and continue to ensure the upholding of Irish Sign Language recognition and break down the barriers of discrimination.

The mission of IDS FET subscribes to that overarching goal as it seeks to empower Deaf learners through education, training, personal development, and preparation for employment. Providing ISL classes for the hearing community also furthers the mission of the IDS because the more hearing people who use ISL, the greater the opportunities for communication and acknowledgement of ISL in family, community, social and workplace contexts.

(iii) Core Values

All IDS FET provision assists in furthering the core values of the IDS. Further Education increases learners' knowledge, skills and competence and so improves their employment opportunities and options for progression to higher education. This in turn contributes to social inclusion, equal opportunities, empowerment, and active citizenship which are at the heart of IDS core values.

IDS Core Values:

1. **Irish Sign Language:** Deaf people have the right to use ISL as their primary language, enriched with Deaf culture, where linguistic oppression must be a thing of the past.

2. **Human Rights: Deaf** people have the right to live as equal citizens on par with hearing people. Discrimination, which is violation of their rights, is illegal

3. **Education:** Deaf children have the right to be educated in ISL in a bi-lingual environment, and Deaf people have the right to full access to all third level institutions.

4. **Social Inclusion:** the provision of qualified ISL interpreters must be utilised, which would enable Deaf people to independently access and participate within the public domain in society

5. **Equal opportunities:** Deaf people have the right to equal employment opportunities on both a management and professional level.

6. **Quality Living Conditions:** Deaf people have the right to equal living standards with the rest of society, where nothing hinders their participation

7. **Families:** Families of Deaf children have the right to receive comprehensive information and access to the Deaf community, its culture and language

8. **Empowerment:** Deaf people have the right to represent the Deaf community on a local level

9. **Social and political partnership:** The government and state agencies must involve Deaf people and Deaf-led organisations in the community, education, health, legal and social fields.

(iv) Aims

- To continue to provide quality courses to meet the needs of the Deaf community, as well as ISL course for hearing community interested in learning in Irish Sign Language
- To provide educational and training access and progression opportunities for Deaf adult learners
- To offer a range of courses that are accredited and recognised within the National Qualifications Framework
- To strengthen and further develop internal structures to meet our role needs as a FET provider
- To expand our e-learning capacity to support and facilitate the delivery of blended and online learning options.
- To support staff development, enable them to grow and reach their full potential within the Irish Deaf Society.

- To build and expand partnership s with other educational institutions to enhance opportunities for Deaf learners.

(v) Key Objectives

Our priorities and objectives are closely integrated with the Irish Deaf Society's overall strategy plans (https://www.irishdeafsociety.ie/publications/strategy/) , as well as with the Online and Blended learning strategic plan. There is a strong overlap between both strategics particularly in area such as inclusive access to education, the development of flexible learning pathways, and the continued enhancement of digital learning tools and infrastructure. Our objectives include the following:

- To maintain and enhance a learner centred teaching and learning environment.
- Improve choices for Deaf learners by expanding the range of QQI validated Major and Minor awards offered in the medium term.
- To secure QQI validation for Minor awards in and Level 6-to meet the huge demand from ISL learners.
- To further develop the e-learning platform that will continue to meet the needs of IDS learners by remaining effective and accessible.
- To develop IDS FET in line with the SOLAS national strategy detailed in *Future FET: Transforming Learning 2020 –24.*
- To establish and implement an internal quality assurance infrastructure that includes data and record management systems.
- To promote and support staff development and professional growth
- To build greater partnership with other educational providers to encourage collaboration, promote shared best practices, and the create clear pathways for learners into further education and employment.

1. IDS Governance and Management of Quality

Our framework for Governance and Management of Quality system embeds our approaches to QA into the culture of IDS FET to ensure we follow QQI QA guidelines and manage the framework effectively. It allows IDS FET to achieve its objectives and strategic targets while maintaining a separation of commercial and academic decision-making.

The governance provided by the IDS Board of Directors, CEO, Quality Assurance Committee and FET Management and Team contribution ensures that IDS FET provision is line with IDS Mission, Vision, and Core Values.

1.1 Governance at IDS

The IDS, The National Association of the Deaf is a company limited by guarantee, registered under Part 18 of the Companies Act, 2014. Registered Company No.321657 Ireland.

The IDS is also a registered charity. Registration No. CHY 20021597. The IDS reports to the Charities Regulator and follows the regulator's official guidance including the Governance Code.

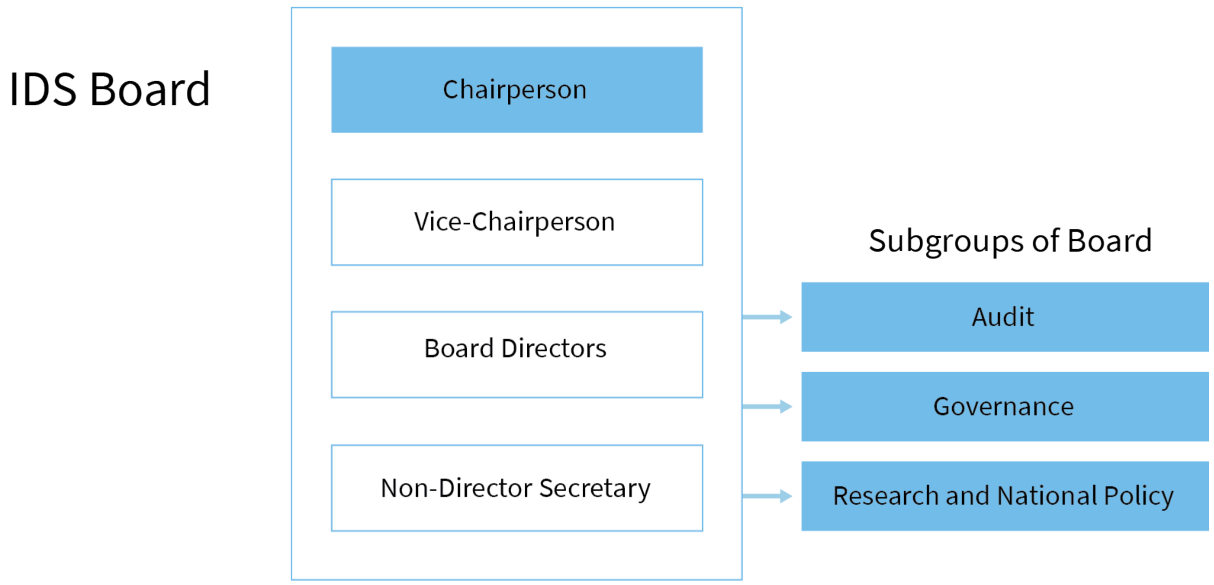
The IDS is a Deaf led organisation, with Deaf people holding most of the leadership positions. Irish Sign Language is the primary means of communication of the Deaf community. Article 72 of the IDS Constitution requires the Chairperson of the Board of Directors to be a Deaf person, while the Vice-Chairperson must also be a Deaf person. Article 45 of the IDS Constitution states that "at least two thirds of the Directors will be Deaf" (see IDS Constitution, Appendix 12). Deaf leadership facilitates capacity building, empowerment, and provides role models for the Deaf community, recognised as one of the most marginalised groups in Irish society. Deaf leaders' best understand the needs of Deaf people based on their own life experience. The Deaf leadership philosophy is aligned to the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), which aims to leave no one behind and ensure adherence to the principle *"nothing about us without us".*

1.1.1 The CEO

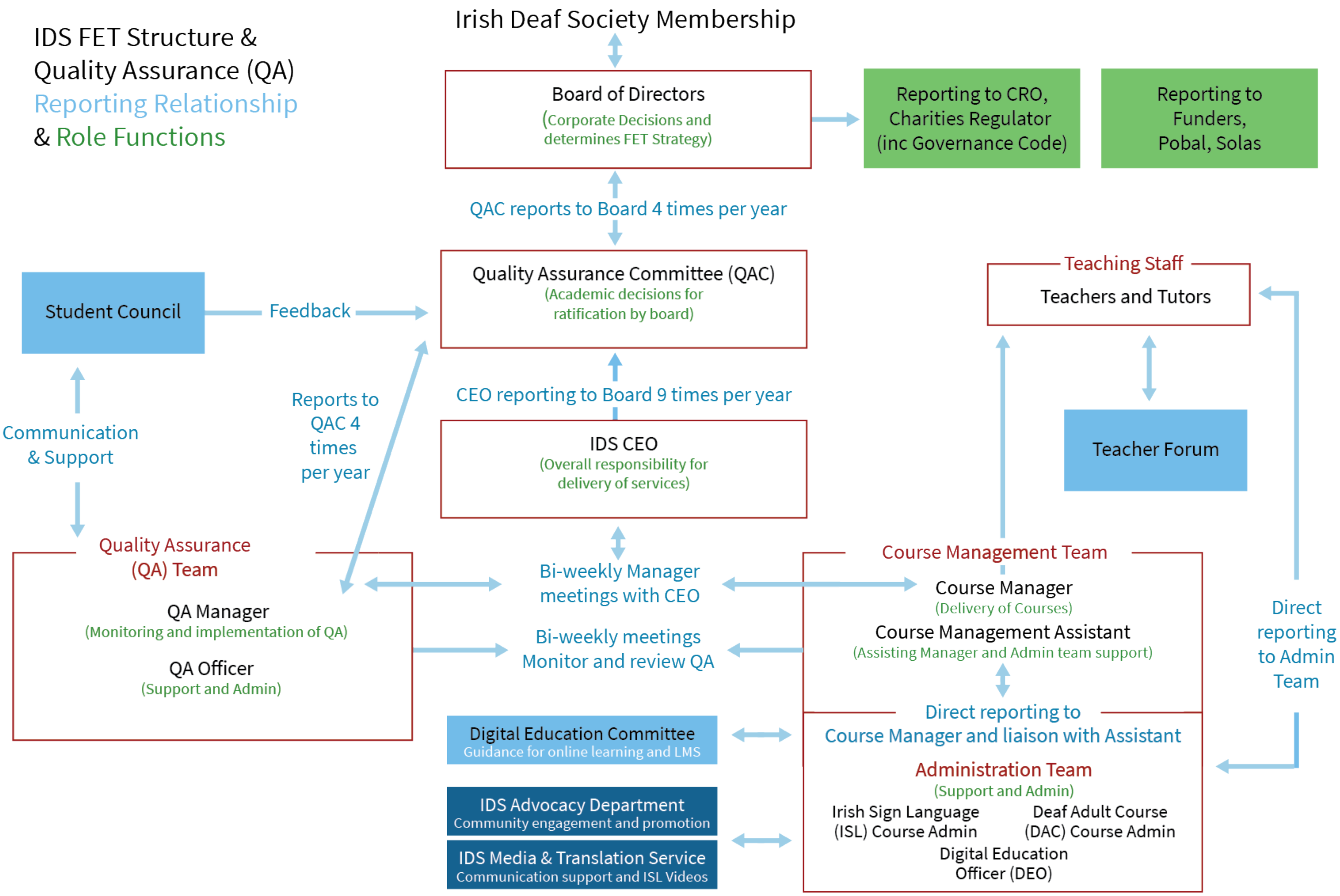
The IDS Board of Directors (the Board) determines the strategic direction of the IDS and ensures that it works towards achieving its mission. The CEO reports directly to the Board and ultimately is responsible for the quality delivery of services across the organisation. The CEO has responsibility for, and authority over all sections of the organisation. In addition to the FET Department, the IDS has an Advocacy Department, a Retail/Fund Raising Department, and a Finance Department. The CEO holds management bi-weekly meetings with the 5 managers of the departments:

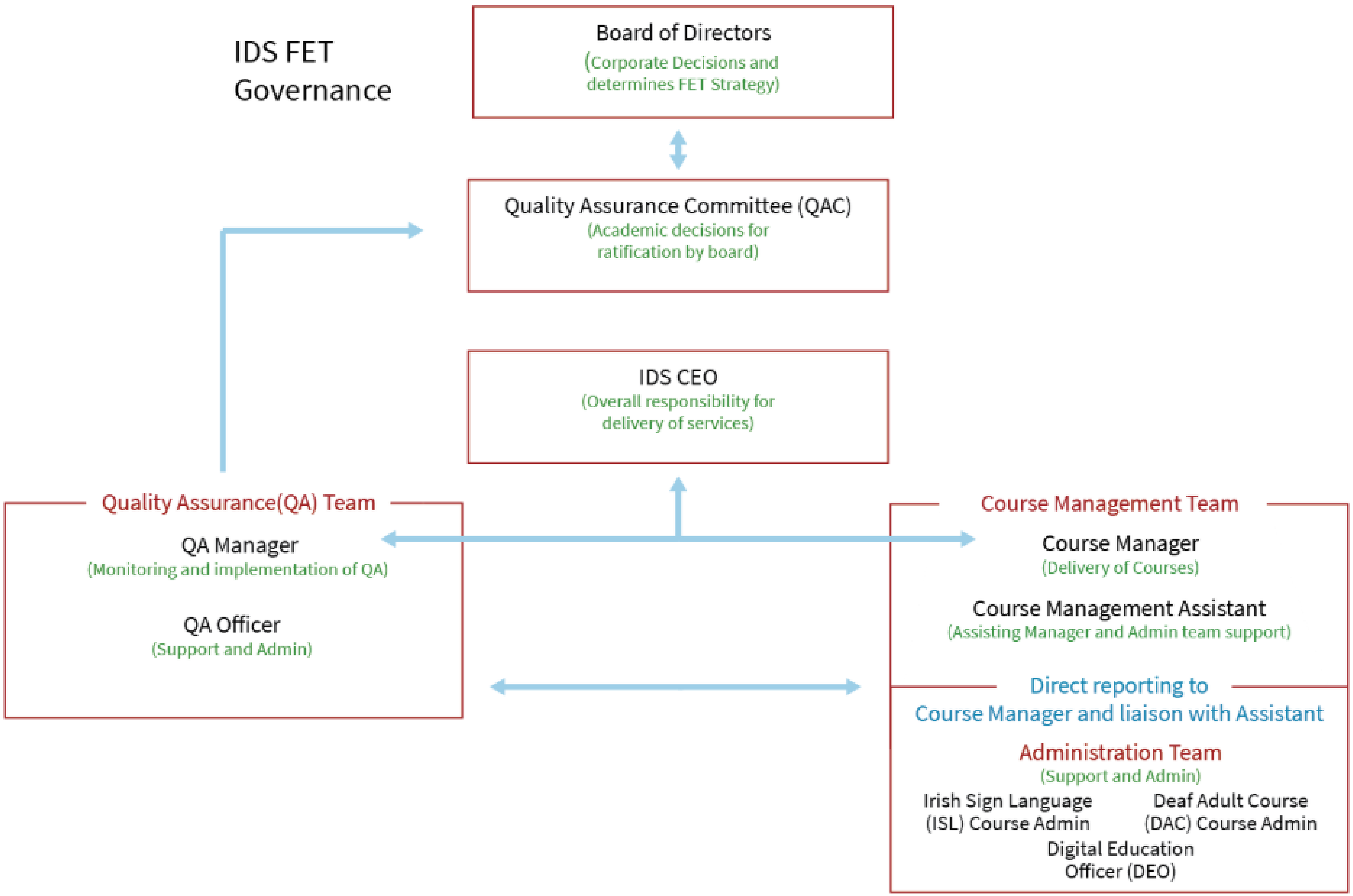
- Finance Manager
- FET Quality Assurance Manager
- FET Course Manager
- Advocacy Manager
- Retail and Fundraising Manager

The FET Managers communicate any relevant information from those meetings to the FET administration and support staff and the members of teaching staff.

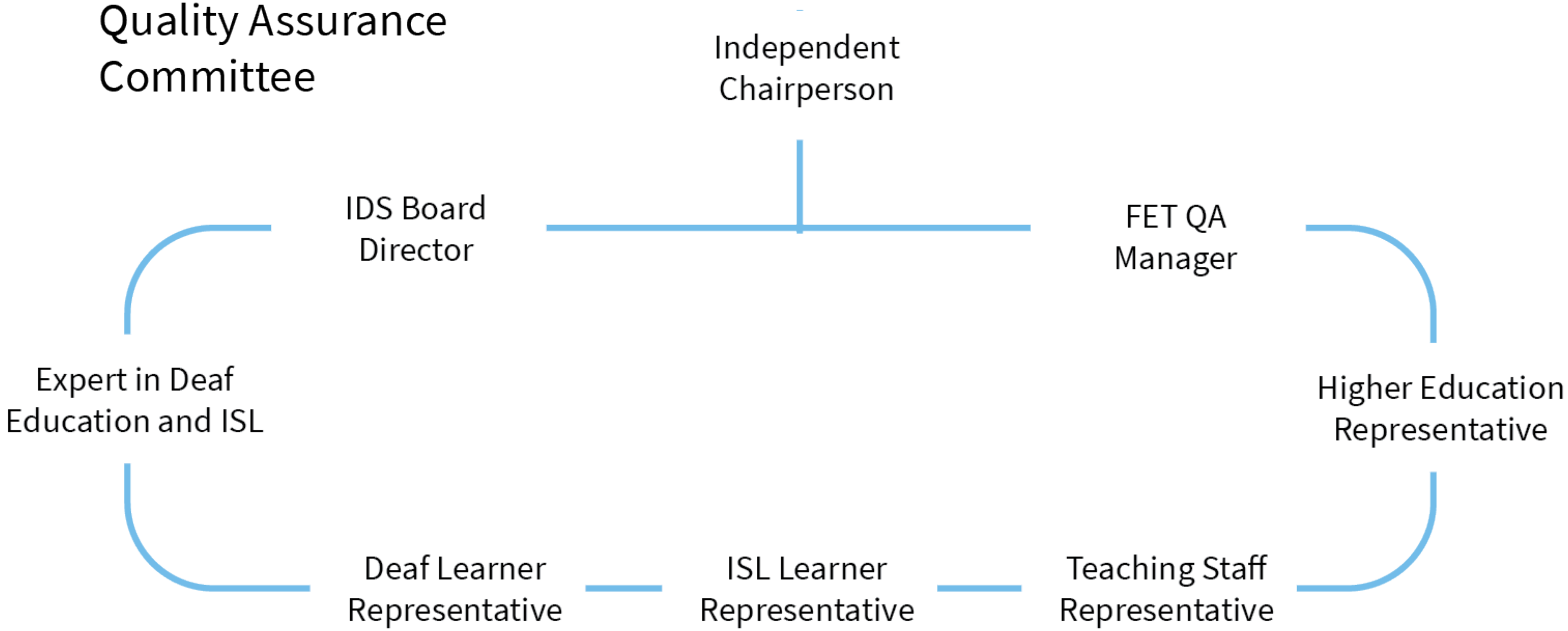


IDS FET Structure & Quality Assurance (QA) Reporting Relationship & Role Functions




IDS FET Governance
Board of Directors
(Corporate Decisions and determines FET Strategy)
Quality Assurance Committee (QAC)
(Academic decisions for ratification by board)
IDS CEO
(Overall responsibility for delivery of services)
Quality Assurance(QA) Team
QA Manager
(Monitoring and implementation of QA)
QA Officer
(Support and Admin)
Course Management Team
Course Manager
(Delivery of Courses)
Course Management Assistant
(Assisting Manager and Admin team support)
Direct reporting to
Course Manager and liaison with Assistant
Administration Team
(Support and Admin)
Irish Sign Language (ISL) Course Admin
Deaf Adult Course (DAC) Course Admin
Digital Education Officer (DEO)

IDS FET Quality Assurance Committee



1.1.1 The Board of Directors

The Board of Directors: (referred to as 'the Board')

The IDS Constitution April 2021 sets out the roles and duties of the IDS Board, the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson of the Board and the Board Secretary, as required by statutory and regulatory obligations (see Appendix 12 The IDS Constitution)

The Constitution sets out at Articles 45 - 71 the role of the Board of Directors and specifies the number of Directors, the requirement for two-thirds of the directors to be Deaf, and clarifies that no remuneration is payable to directors.

Roles of the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Board of Directors

Articles 72-74 of the IDS Constitution set out the role and responsibilities of the Chairperson and the Deputy-Chairperson of the Board as follows:

72. (i) The Directors shall elect from among their number a Chairperson of their meetings and determine the period for which he or she is to hold office, but if at any meeting the Chairperson or the Vice-chairperson is not present within five minutes after the time appointed for holding the same, the Directors present may choose one of their number to chair their meeting.

(ii) The Chairperson shall be a Deaf person.

(iii) The Directors shall elect from among their number a Vice-Chairperson, who shall also be a Deaf person, whose role will be to deputise for the Chairperson

73. The duties and responsibilities of the Chairperson shall include (but not be limited to):

(i) overseeing the governance and performance of the Company, setting the agenda for meetings, and facilitating the effective contribution of other Directors:

(ii) in conjunction with the other Directors, ensuring that there are appropriate strategies in place to implement the policies of the Company; and

(iii) chairing meetings of the Board of Directors and ensuring that the Board functions effectively and efficiently.

74. In the event of an equality of votes, the Chairperson shall have a second or casting vote.

The IDS Board of Directors has, and must maintain, a good balance of educational, corporate, legal and risk management expertise

The IDS Governance Code

The IDS complies with the Charity Governance Code of the Charity Regulator, which sets out a framework for the organisation to identify the standards it should meet to ensure effective management and control. The 6 principles of charity governance set down core standards for each of the following areas:

1. Advancing charitable purpose
2. Behaving with integrity
3. Leading people
4. Exercising control
5. Working effectively
6. Being accountable and transparent

The Summary of the IDS Governance Code Evidence Document, Section 1 (Appendix 11) describes in detail (a) actions taken to meet the standard in each case, and (b) evidence of IDS action (see Appendix 11). Evidence of actions taken to meet the standards of the 47 sub-headings included in the document include reference to: CEO and Managers Monthly Reports to the Board, the IDS Constitution 2021, the Mission Statement, Annual Directors Declaration Form, the IDS Strategic Plan, the Annual Budget, Annual Operation Plan, Board Meetings Agenda and Minutes, Data reports on QQI and PLSS systems, SOLAS and Pobal Reporting, Contract with external HR Support company, Financial Reports to the Board, Audited Accounts, Risk Register, Staff Handbook, Complaints Policy (see IDS Governance Code, Appendix 11)

1.1.2 The IDS FET Quality Assurance Committee (QAC)

In July 2021, the IDS set up its FET Quality Assurance Committee (QAC), as its academic council, which oversees the education and training activities of IDS to ensure its quality [see the Terms of Reference (TOR) of the QAC Appendix 6]. The QAC reports to the IDS Board. The QAC has a majority of independent members to ensure separation of responsibilities between those who produce and develop material and those who approve it, and between those who make academic decisions and those who make commercial decisions. The QAC membership includes members with an academic background who are appropriately qualified and experienced.

THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE QAC INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING:

- Independent Chairperson**.** The chairperson is required to have experience in the QQI quality assurance process. Experience of programme review and development is desirable.
- IDS Quality Assurance Manager
- IDS Board Director. The Board Director, appointed from time to time, will bring additional expertise to the QAC membership through private industry specialism such as compliance and risk management.
- Higher Education Institute Representative (Independent).
- Expert in Deaf Education and Irish Sign Language (Independent).
- Teaching Staff Representative
- Learners Representative x 2 (one Deaf learner and one hearing learner)
- Other members as nominated by the Committee (for specific purpose or period of time)

The QAC protects the integrity of academic processes and standards. Its duties, as listed in the Terms of Reference, are to:

1. Monitor and review the design, development, and implementation of programmes in accordance with IDS functions including analysis of learner enrolment data, attrition, completion and progression rates, internal and external stakeholder feedback and learner achievement.
2. Assuring the quality of awards for which the IDS has been granted validation and maintaining standards in accordance with core QQI policies and the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ).

3. Review academic quality assurance policies and procedures at IDS to ensure compliance with accreditation body guidelines (i.e., QQI)) and make recommendations to management.

4. Adjudicate on complaints or appeals that are relevant to the work of the Committee.

5. Promoting and ensuring adherence to current pedagogical best practice including the use of appropriate learning technologies and teaching modalities.

6. Review the adequacy of resources at IDS (e.g., trainers, facilities, equipment, training materials, learner supports).

7. Ensure the provision by IDS management of opportunities and resources for Continuous Professional Development of staff.

8. Ensure that IDS provides information that is complete, accurate and accessible to all relevant stakeholders in a timely manner.

9. To propose, review and approve new programmes/modules and modifications to existing programmes.
10. To ensure action plans for the improvement and evaluation of programmes and related activities are implemented.

11. To identify risks concerning IDS academic affairs and learners, communicating these risks to the IDS Board and provide considerations or recommendations regarding such risks.

12. To facilitate the learner voice through the learner representative on the QAC and by responding to learner feedback collected through learner surveys.

13. Approve the appointment of external QA personnel (e.g., External Authenticators, External Evaluators).

14. To coordinate and monitor the effectiveness of learner supports, including Irish Sign Language supports, pastoral care, learning resources and LMS resources.

15. To make recommendations on the financial and non-financial supports and programmes available for research and development (Terms of Reference of the QAC, Appendix 6)

The QAC receives reports and relevant documentation from the FET Course Manager and FET Quality Assurance Manager and the QAC in turn reports and makes recommendations to the IDS Board.

1.2 Management of Quality Assurance

The CEO has overall responsibility for the FET Department along with the other section of the IDS and reports directly to the Board. The day-to-day management of the FET Department and teaching staff is carried out by FET Management staff, the FET Course Manager, and the FET Quality Assurance Manager. The FET Managers are supported by staff at administrative level – the Deaf Course Administrator, the ISL Course Administrator, the Digital Education Officer, the QA Support Officer, and the Media Production Officer. Together these staff make up the FET Management and Administration Team [see IDS FET Governance Chart above]

FET Department staff are responsible, under the CEO, for all aspects of management and administration of FET programmes and related services, including course promotion, programme monitoring, development, timetabling, learner admissions, learner supports, managing and supporting teaching staff, learner assessment, QQI certification through the QQI Business System (QBS), quality assurance policies and procedures, learner information systems including the SOLAS Programme and Learner Information System (PLSS).

Management is also required to adhere legal and regulatory requirements, including relevant obligations under Employment and Equality legislation.

Roles and Responsibilities

1.2.1 The IDS FET Quality Assurance Manager

The Quality Assurance Manager is responsible for ensuring all matters pertaining to quality assurance policies and procedures are effectively implemented and integrated through all levels of IDS FET, and that all staff have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in relation to these.

The Quality Assurance Manager works closely with the Course Manager to ensure that all academic aspects of quality assurance at IDS FET are effectively implemented. The Quality Assurance Manager is the primary point of contact between IDS FET and QQI.

RESPONSIBILITIES INCLUDE:

- Initiate and lead the development of quality assurance activity within IDS FET; implementing and monitoring quality assurance policies and procedures; reporting to the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) in relation to all academic dimensions of quality assurance at IDS FET, including:
- Student recruitment, retention, and achievement
- Indicators of teaching quality, External Authentication and Evaluation reports
- Programmes development, delivery, assessment, and review
- Student, staff, and stakeholder feedback

- Resources and materials
- Ensuring the dissemination of information pertaining to quality assurance across all FET administration and teaching staff; leading staff development activities to embed quality assurance in staff practice.
- Manage the development and implementation of FET quality assurance and enhancement of policies and procedures in association with QQI, QAC and other key education and training providers.
- Overseeing the authorship, maintenance, and review of all documentation relevant to IDS FET Engagement with QQI.
- Supporting programme teams in programme validation and programme review activity and overseeing the implementation of the approval process.
- Monitoring and reporting on implementation of self- evaluation improvement plans.
- In close cooperation with the Course Manager, developing and managing effective processes for collecting, reporting, and acting upon student and teacher feedback; make regular and timely reports on student and teacher feedback to the QAC
- Develop programmes to meet learners' requirements to progress to employment and/or further education, promoting job inclusion to the Irish marketplace.
- Carry out research projects, internal and external reviews by QA agencies and prepare reports in relation to academic matters arising from FET to CEO and QAC.

Reporting

- The Quality Assurance Manager reports to the CEO. The Quality Assurance Manager provides direct line management to the Quality Assurance Support Officer.

1.2.2 The IDS Course Manager

The Course Manager provides operational leadership to FET staff team to ensure effective coordination of all programmes with the responsibility for managing and delivery of academic affairs at the IDS FET, working to promote excellence in teaching, teacher training, learner’s support, and programme development.

The Course Manager works closely with the Quality Assurance Manager to ensure that all academic aspects of quality assurance at IDS FET are effectively implemented.

Responsibilities Include:

- Managing the development and implementation of the Teaching and Learning and Assessment Strategies of IDS FET
- Management of teaching staff (teachers and tutors)
- Managing the implementation of innovations appropriate to IDS FET

- Identifying staff development needs in relation to teaching and learning; establishing a plan for ongoing professional development of teaching staff and overseeing its implementation.
- Providing guidance to staff or committees engaged in programme review and development activities.
- In close cooperation with the Quality Assurance Manager, developing and managing effective processes for collecting, reporting, and acting upon learner and teacher feedback; make regular and timely reports on learner and teacher feedback to the QAC.
- Working closely with the Deaf Adult Course (DAC) Administrator, the ISL Course Administrator, the Digital Education Officer, and other key staff in ensuring the learner experience at IDS FET is optimal.
- Dealing directly with learner queries, problems and issues relating to their course of study.
- Reviewing learner feedback and developing action plans where appropriate to address issues in consultation with the FET Management and Administration Team.
- Overseeing learner admissions
- Monitoring learner progress in consultation with Course Administrators, and, where appropriate, with individual teachers.
- Liaising with the CEO and Quality Assurance Manager on the appropriate recruitment and induction of new teachers.
- Facilitating the Bi-Weekly IDS FET Management and Administration Team Meetings, teaching staff meetings, and the Teaching Staff Forum.

Reporting

The Course Manager reports to the CEO. The Course Manager provides direct line management to the Course Manager Assistant, the Deaf Adult Course Administrator, the ISL Course Administrator, the Digital Education Officer, and teaching staff.

1.2.3 Course Manager Assistant

Their role is to support the Course Manager with a range of administrative tasks, including reporting and the effective management of Information Systems related to FET Programmes. They liaise with teaching staff to resolve operational issues and act as a key communication point between staff and management. They contribute to the effective placement and retention of learners and assist in the administration of assessments and learner portfolios. They help course manager to project manage the implementation of quality assurance policies and procedures, support the coordination and communication with administrative staff, and assist the FET management team in staff training, as well as the development and review of programmes, course specifications, assessments, and training plans.

1.2.4 Quality Assurance Officer

The QA Officer assists QA management in the sourcing of relevant information, educational methodologies, and practices to meet the requirements of QQI and other stakeholders. They also support and assist the design, development, and implementation of our FET QA systems. They are responsible for supporting QA management in the development, review and documentations of our QA policies and procedures. They also manage administration and documentations associated with QQI and other stakeholders. They participate in QA meetings and write reports for management.

1.2.5 DAC Administrator

They manage the administration, support systems and activities that keeps FET running smoothly and facilitates successful learning for all Deaf adults. They handle responses from the Deaf community directly and support our teaching staff who teach various subjects. They are also on the social media team promoting FET courses to the Deaf community nationwide.

1.2.6 ISL Course Administrator

Their role is to keep the overall FET process flowing smoothly, making decisions that facilitate successful learning for all hearing adults ISL learners. They handle responses from the hearing population directly, and support teaching staff who teaches ISL. They also assist the course manager on the financial administration of ISL courses.

For both the ISL Course Administrator and DAC Administrator roles their typical responsibilities include:

- Prepare and analyse data and statistics related to the assessments process and learner attendance.
- Liaising with potential learners, other educational providers, and government departments
- Support and guidance to learners throughout their educational journey.
- Assist with Course approval, evaluation work and programme planning and development.
- Supporting management in implementing policies and procedures
- Contributing to term planning, timetabling, class scheduling-and planning events.
- Administer relating to learner registration, assessments, examinations, and-internal verification processes.
- Managing and supporting blended and online learning environments, learners' engagement tools, and digital resource development.
- Maintaining our information systems and databases

- Record and process learner information on SOLAS PLSS and QQI QBS systems
- Researching and writing reports, attending meetings as FET representatives, and submitting summaries or updates to management.
- Organising and coordinate workshops, and CPD training events for teaching staff
- Prepare communications, promotional materials, and online content to support outreach.

1.2.7 Digital Education Officer (DEO)

The DEO is responsible for the development and implementation of our LMS. They co-ordinate and align the design of digital learning activities supporting the operational process with the key focus to improve content and learners' experience of using the LMS. This includes providing ongoing support for the learner for the duration of the course. They collaboratively work with the administration team and teaching staff to support their needs in developing digital learning resources and initiatives such as ISL video material and interactive resources to enhance the digital learning environment. The DEO focuses on meeting accessibility requirements and implements UDL principles in the courses on the LMS. They also research and provide digital-led learning resources in response to pilot projects aimed at our diverse set of learners. The DEO takes a leading role in marketing collaboration with the LMS to promote the IDS FET. They attend our Digital Education Committee meetings to consult with experts who provide advice and recommendations on online education for ISL teaching and learning.

1.2.8 Media Production Co-Ordinator

Their primary responsibilities in FET are assisting the DEO to develop and implement educational ISL video materials for our LMS. They provide an administrative support role monitoring the quality assurance of the production team's output. The role entails a range of oversight work including planning, scheduling, directing and executing production activities for maximum output. In addition, they also lead marketing strategies in promoting ISL awareness to the public sector.

1.3 Embedding a Quality Culture

IDS FET is a learner-centred provider and is committed to the active development of a culture which recognises the importance of consistency, quality assurance, quality improvement and enhancement; where all staff are involved in quality assurance for short-, medium- and long-term activities in FET, and in which the quality and improvement is accepted as a responsibility of all members of IDS.

Quality Assurance system is developed in consultation with all those involved in FET as well harnessing insights from the Quality Assurance Committee, teaching staff, and learners.

The IDS FET QA framework is shared with staff and learners through a variety of channels, and policies are available on SharePoint and the LMS.

1.4 Blended and Fully On-line Learning

In October 2023, the QQI published new Statutory Guidelines for Blended and Fully Online Learning. Although online provision of courses was previously approved by the QQI, this was a temporary measure to support the contingency plan in place during the Covid emergency period.

The IDS FET is now seeking statutory approval to extend its scope of provision to include Blended Learning and Fully Online Learning, delivered both synchronously and asynchronously.

The IDS FET has experience of delivering online programmes as it has implemented a Contingency Plan from September 2020 to support learners during the Covid period. As a result, the IDS developed policies, procedures, recruited a Digital Education Officer and established its own virtual learning environment (LMS) to ensure compliance with QQI requirements.

The recently published *Topic Specific Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Providers of Blended and Fully Online Programmes (2023)* required a review of policies and procedures. It also required the IDS to develop the following;

- Irish Deaf Society Further Education and Training Policy for Blended Learning and Fully Online Learning (BLFOL)
- Irish Deaf Society Further Education and Training Strategy for Blended Learning and Fully Online Learning (BLFOL)

The IDS has invested significantly in recent years to provide courses to a wide geographical area and as outlined in the Strategy for BLFOL [Appendix 3], is committed to continuing this investment. The Policy is presented as a standalone document while also forming an integral part of the overall Quality Assurance (QA) framework and referred as *IDS FET Policy for Blended Learning and fully Online (BLFOL) Version 1*

2. Documented Approach to Quality Assurance

Circulation and Document Version Control:

The accuracy and currency of the Quality Assurance Manual is the responsibility of the Quality Assurance Manager, working closely with the CEO and the QAC. All staff are also involved in the development and review of QA policies and procedures at IDS FET. Updates to the Quality Assurance Manual are approved by, and reported to QAC annually, or more frequently, if/as required.

The most current version of the Quality Assurance Manual is made available to all staff via SharePoint. All definitive versions of quality framework support documents are stored in IDS FET Quality Folders within the FET Section on SharePoint and accessible across the FET Team.

2.1 IDS FET Policy on Policy and Procedures:

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the principles governing the creation, maintenance and reviewing of QA policies and procedures at IDS FET.

Scope

This is an overarching policy with relevance to the activities of all IDS FET staff and learners, both academic and support.

Policy Statement

The IDS QA Framework is comprised of a set of quality assurance policies and associated procedures which are supported by a set of quality assurance resources. These are defined as follows:

(1) *Quality Assurance Policy:* this sets out a principle or an intended course of action, and guides decision-making

(2) *Quality Assurance Procedure:* this describes the specific actions undertaken to implement a policy

(3) *Quality Assurance Resource:* this is a document that supports the implementation of policies and procedures such as a checklist, a handbook, or an application form.

Each policy is accompanied by a statement of purpose.

Each procedure will describe **(1)** the method for its implementation **(2)** who is responsible for implementing it **(3)** how the procedure is monitored **(4)** Contact

Procedure for Developing Policy

In response to the need to review or develop a new policy, the matter is brought to the QA Manager, who then consults with the CEO.

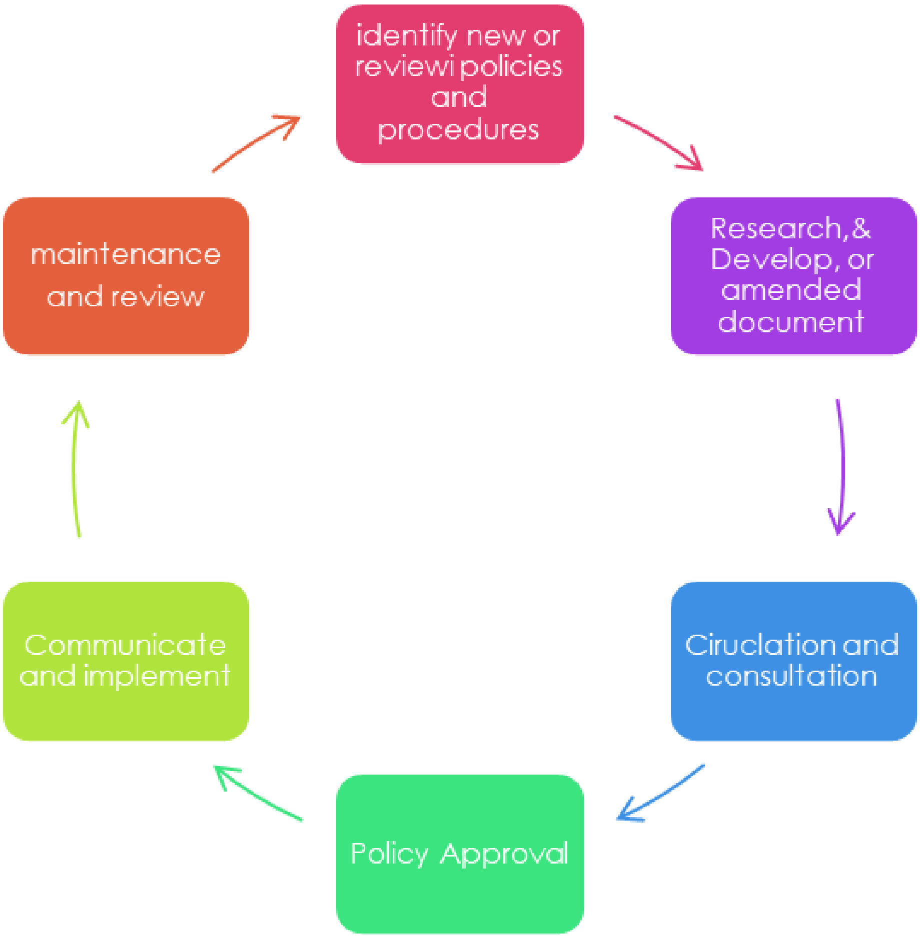
If the CEO approves the development of a policy proposal, the QA Manager researches and collects data and organises consultation with staff, learners, and other stakeholders as appropriate.
A policy proposal will then be drafted to provide a clear and concise policy statement, rationale, policy scope and glossary of key terms where necessary, using the IDS policy template.

All IDS FET policy requires the approval of the QAC and the IDS Board. The process and timescale for receiving and approving draft policy proposals will depend on the nature, scope and complexity of policy.

The QA Manager will be responsible for implementing and updating the IDS FET QA Framework and communicating all new policy development to the relevant internal and external stakeholders.

Policy Review and amendments

The QA Manager is responsible for maintaining IDS FET policies and procedures and are reviewed on a three-year cycle, or when feedback indicates a need for review.



The QA Manager will ensure that IDS FET QA policies and procedures:

Are informed by *QQI Quality Assurance Guidelines including Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for all Providers (April 2016), Sector Specific Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Independent/Private Providers (April 2016), Quality Assuring Assessment Guidelines for Providers (Revised 2013) and Topic Specific Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Providers of Blended and Fully Online Programmes (2023).*

IDS is aware of the benefits online and blended education can offer to all stakeholders IDS has applied for approval *for Blended-Onsite + Synchronous Only and Fully Online – Synchronous & Asynchronous – National Programmes.*

- Are communicated and available to staff and published on IDS website and by other means as deemed as appropriate.
- Have formal standing within the IDS. They will have been approved by the IDS Quality Assurance Committee and the IDS Board and form part of the strategic management of the organisation.
- Include a role for learners and other stakeholders in their design.
- Promote Quality improvement and culture of quality.

- Facilitate diversity and support innovation.
- Demonstrate accountability, while always aiming for continuous improvement.
- Are reviewed on a 3-year cycle, or when feedback indicates a need for review to ensure they are fit for purpose and remain effective.
- Are consistent with the requirements of relevant legislation, QA manual, code of conduct and practices, and supporting statement and guiding documents.

Contact: Any queries regarding our polices should be directed to the QA Manager

2.2 Policy on Risk Management

IDS FET Risk Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to provide guidance and a framework for IDS FET to support its management of risks, define roles and responsibilities and reporting of risks to ensure that risks to IDS FET operations are maintained at acceptable levels (defined as "Risks").

Definition of Risk

Risks may also be split into both 'Current' and 'Emerging' Risks. A 'Current' risk is a single risk, or combination of risks, that can materially affect the performance, future prospects or reputation of IDS FET. An 'Emerging' risk is a new or novel manifestation of risk of a type which has never before been experienced or one which existed before but has not been encountered for a number of years. Emerging risks are difficult to quantify in terms of likelihood, materiality and impact due to the limited knowledge of their nature and potential impact.

This Policy and supporting Risk Management Framework (RMF) will ensure ongoing identification, evaluation, and control of Risk on an ongoing basis across all decisions making units of IDS FET.

Scope

This Policy applies to the activities of all IDS FET Department staff and learners where any outcome from their action(s) or decision(s) could expose the IDS FET to Risks. The Risk Register contains all current identified Risks, with a sufficiently detailed description to allow an understanding of the Risk. It also details the controls and actions in place to mitigate the Risk.

Each Risk is allocated to one of the following broad Risk Category Areas:

- Governance

- Strategic
- Compliance (Legal and Regulatory)
- Operational
- Financial
- Environmental or External
- Reputational

Policy on Risk

IDS FET will ensure that Risks to Its operations, sustainability, educational provision, learners or other stakeholders are identified, analysed and managed so that they are maintained at acceptable levels. The Board of Directors has ultimate responsibility for risk and internal control within IDS FET.

Risk Management Framework (RMF)

The Board of Directors (the Board) charges the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC), the CEO and the FET Management Team with updating the Risks Register to take account of all identified academic and corporate risks. The Risk Register Template of the Charities Regulator is used to form the basis of the IDS FET Risk Register. IDS FET will maintain a fully populated Risk Register. Submissions are reported to the Board who will review, recommend and approve the Register for the year to satisfy itself the Risks identified are being monitored / remediated and that the FET has adequate risk mitigation plans in place for all Risks.

The risk related duties of the QAC, CEO and the FET Management Team include:

- Advise and assist the Board in discharging its oversight responsibilities in the areas of risk identification, assessment, and management.
- Review and monitor the establishment and continuous updating of a risk register to identify, assess, and manage Risk and compliance with statutory obligations.
- Monitor and ensure FET has sufficient resources and access to information so as to perform their functions effectively and achieve FET objectives.
- Review performance and terms of reference to ensure their ongoing effectiveness and recommend any necessary changes to ensure continuous risk management. Every year, the QAC, will update the Risk Register and the Quality Assurance Manager will report their updates to the CEO who will report to the Board, who will review all Risks and satisfy themselves that optimum risk identification and management procedures are in place.

Monitoring and Review of the Risk Register

The Risk Register will be reviewed, with risk identified and evaluated on a quarterly basis by the CEO and FET Management with a report to be provided to the QAC and Board of Directors.

The QAC will have an agenda item entitled "Risk Management" that will actively monitor academic risks and will report to IDS Board if there are any changes to the Risks.

The Risk Register will be formally reviewed on an annual basis by IDS Finance Manager and Audit Committee.
The IDS Risk Register includes a guide to interpreting the register and risk rating.

Risk Rating

Each risk is scored on three axes - 'Impact' and 'Likelihood' and 'Control'
Risks are then graded on a scale from 'Low' to 'High' using the calculated risk total.

Likelihood

Current assessment of the possibility of the risk actually occurring and how often it occurred in the past. from 1 (rare) to 5 (occurring).

Impact

Assessment of the likely impact on the organisation and stakeholders if the risk occurs from 1 (no impact) to 5 (detrimental impact) if the risk occurred.

Control

Given the controls which are currently in place, how effective are they at mitigating the risk from 1 (controls effective) to 3 (controls ineffective)

Risk total

The risk score is determined *by multiplying the risk impact by the risk likelihood by the effectiveness of the controls.*

Risks are sorted into 3 separate categories as follows based on their risk weighting:

H = High level risk - those with a value of 25 or higher
M = Medium level risk - those with a value of 13 to 24
L = Low level risk - those with a value of 0 to 12

Policy Review

The Policy and Risk Register is maintained and shall be reviewed on an annual basis after the effective date by CEO and FET Management. Updates will be made where required. In the event no changes are required, the Policy should record that a review was undertaken as part of its effectiveness of the controls. The FET QA Manager will submit the Policy to QAC for review and final approval on an annual basis.

2.3 A Comprehensive System

The QQI *Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (April 2016)* document lists 11 areas to be addressed in a provider's quality assurance policies and procedures. In addition to the academic domain, quality assurance covers the corporate domain, area such as governance, human resources, finance. The IDS Governance Code gives details on the processes for quality assuring those areas in the corporate domain.

IDS has in place an internal self-monitoring system which regularly checks the effectiveness of procedures and acts as an early warning system in areas of provision requiring improvement. The system includes:

- A Quality Assurance Manager who is part of the FET Management Team, oversees and monitors all aspects of implementation of quality assurance policies and procedures on an ongoing basis

- A bi-weekly meeting of the FET Management and Administration Team chaired by the FET Course Manager. Any matters relevant to FET provision requiring attention are discussed at the meeting and action points agreed. It is IDS FET policy to record meetings, where possible, for the purpose of the minutes.

- Teachers report promptly to the management team any matters of concern that learners raise with them. The bi-weekly meetings facilitate an early response to such issues.

- The Student Council, which represents the general body of learners in IDS, meets with the Quality Assurance Manager on a regular basis. This provides another forum to monitor FET Department procedures [see the Terms of Reference of the Student Council, Appendix 7]

- The QQI External Authenticator Reports provide objective feedback on and insight into the performance of IDS FET. Issues arising are followed up in the academic term following External Authenticator (EA) visit.

- The end of year Programme Review Meeting (see Section 3.2 and Appendix 10 for more details) reviews issues which arose during the year and progress in implementing action plans put in place to address those issues, along with recommendations from the EA Report and Internal Verification Report.

- Surveys on the level of learner satisfaction, conducted with each class group during the course, provides another mechanism for monitoring procedures. The Destination Survey to determine if learners have progressed to employment, further study, or are currently using their ISL, conducted after each course, gives further data on the quality of IDS courses.

- IDS policy and procedures to address learner complaints, as detailed in Section 3.3.7 are further valuable resource to support monitoring.

Self-Evaluation

IDS has a Self-Evaluation system in place as detailed in Section 11. IDS is committed to an external evaluation of its programmes and related services every 3-5 years. The Quality Assurance Manager has responsibility to ensure that programmes are externally evaluated, while the IDS Quality Assurance Committee or QQI can recommend the undertaking of a review of a programme at any point if it is deemed appropriate. All evaluation reports are submitted to the QAC, which then monitors the progress of any action points and agreed timeframe for implementation of recommendations. The methodology for Self- Evaluation of Programmes is detailed in Section 11.3

Sustainability

The IDS relies on, and must maintain, a strong and sustainable resource base to support its operations and ensure sustainability. This includes maintaining the necessary IT infrastructure to support online and blended delivery which has become increasingly important in recent years. Each year, at its AGM, the IDS presents its audited accounts, demonstrating transparency and financial accountability.

The IDS FET Department provides an invaluable service to a marginalised community and the demand for IDS courses has increased consistently upwards trend through to 2025, in recognition of this, SOLAS funds IDS courses.

3. Programmes of Education and Training

3.1 Programme Development and Approval Policy

Policy

The aim of this policy is to ensure that programmes are relevant, effective and designed in a flexible accessible way to meet the needs of Deaf and Hard of Hearing adults who require pathways to employment and further education, and hearing adults who wish to further their learning of ISL. IDS is committed to ensuring that programme design and learning outcomes can be fully achieved and measurable regardless of the mode of delivery.

In line with this commitment, the IDS will also ensure that programmes that are developed for Blended and Fully Online learning delivery have regard to *QQI Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for providers of Blended and Fully Online programmes (2023).*

The development process will consider the specific resources required for delivering blended, fully online, including both asynchronous and synchronous learning, and on-site programmes. This includes pedagogical design, staff training, technological infrastructure, and learner supports.

In addition, the policy aims to ensure that programmes are critically reflected on and continuously improved through monitoring and review.

In preparing a programme proposal for QQI Validation, the IDS will ensure it is written to comply with *QQI Policies and Criteria for the Validation of Programmes of Education* and *QQI Policies and criteria for the validation of programmes leading to Common Awards System (CAS) awards,* or policies and criteria for non-CAS awards *where relevant.*

Purpose

The Deaf community in Ireland comprises of approximately 5,000 deaf people and 50,000 hearing people who use ISL for family, work and social purposes. The mission of IDS FET is to meet the needs of this community.

The purpose of this policy is to guide the development, delivery, and evaluation of IDS FET programmes including programmes delivered on-site, blended, or fully online. The policy reflects IDS FET's mission to meet the needs of the Deaf community in Ireland, approximately 5,000 Deaf people and 50,000 hearing people who use ISL for family, work, and social purpose.

Scope

This policy applies to all IDS FET's policy and procedures to the development and validation of programmes intended for submission to QQI. It includes review processes to ensure consistency with IDS FET's strategy and its principles for blended and online learning. -A separate, adapted policy applies for the development of non-QQI programmes. Consequently, this policy applies to all staff involved in the development and approval of programmes at IDS FET.

3.2 Programme Development and Approval Procedure

The IDS Programme Approval Procedures ensures that a new programme across all modalities (onsite, blended and fully online) proposal meets the following criteria:

- address an identifiable need
- Has a clear set of objectives
- Is economically viable
- Is sufficiently resourced in terms of suitably qualified and capable staff as well as appropriate physical and technological resources
- Aligns with IDS strategic objectives and strategic goals, such as expanding digital learning and offering flexible options.
- Is suitable for delivery and assessment in both Blended and Online Learning modes.
- Maintains an appropriate balance between synchronous and asynchronous modes in both blended/on-site and online format.
- Encourages engagement and interaction between learners and teaching staff in both the on-site and online settings
- Complies with IDS relevant QA policy and procedures, also meet QQI validation requirements.

An overview of the process above and each of the above stages is detailed below:

1. Programme Prospect and Opportunity

A new programme idea can originate from several sources including:

- Feedback from current learners and employers
- Enquires from the public
- IDS FET team (staff, teachers, tutors)
- Engagement with external stakeholder and partner organisations
- ISL Subject Matter Experts
- IDS Board or IDS QAC
- Government policy
- Monitoring of the economic and social environment
- Research and analysis in relation to employment and skills gap
- Recommendations from evaluation reports

2. Quality Assurance MANAGER & Proposal Team Analysis

Before a new programme is developed by IDS the idea will be discussed by the IDS Quality Assurance Manager and relevant team members, who form a Proposal Team to assess the following:

- Whether the programme aligns with IDS Strategic plan and FET Online and Learning Strategy plan
- It's relevant to market needs
- Learner demand for the programme
- Whether IDS can offer the programme independently or in collaboration with another educational provider
- Availability of required resources, including IT infrastructure, financial budget, physical and learner support service.

Criteria Blended and Fully Online Programme(s)
In demonstrating that they meet the criteria of application to programmes leading to award in the National Framework of Qualifications, Blended and /or fully online programmes being proposed for approval or validation will address the issues specific to the mode:

- Programme Structure and Delivery
- Stakeholder Engagement and Collaboration
- Staff Expertise and Development
- Technology, Platforms and Resources
- Curriculum Design, Teaching, Learning and Assessment
- Ownership, Integrity and Communication
- Learner Support and Engagement

A Programme Development Checklist is provided to facilitate and support programme teams in analysing and planning to ensure that programmes are fit-for-purpose before being reviewed by CEO and QAC. *[see appendix 13 for IDS FET Programme Development Checklist Template]*

A budget for the proposed programme is drawn up showing projected income and expenditure over a 5-year period. This budget will cover the delivery and assessment of the proposed programme in onsite, blended and online modes. If the Proposal Team conclude that there may be a case for further programme development, the proposal is forwarded to the CEO for consideration.

3. CEO and QAC Reviews of Programme Proposal

The CEO undertakes a cost/ benefit analysis and considers the viability of the proposal before potentially authorising the writing of a more comprehensive draft programme. This stage also includes reviewing the requirements of Protection for Enrolled Learners (PEL).

If the CEO authorises further development, the QA Manager submits the proposal to the next meeting of the QAC. In this way approval from both the academic and corporate decision makers is sought. The QAC may approve further development, on the understanding that the draft programme, once developed, will be brought back to the QAC which will initiate a peer review of the draft programme by a Subject Matter Expert using the *QQI Evaluation of CAS (or non-CAS) Minor Programmes against QQI Validation Criteria* document.

4. Programme Development & Execution Plan

The Quality Assurance Manager will be responsible for co-ordinating the writing a draft comprehensive programme and supporting materials to complete the QQI CAS Programme Descriptor Template. This will include following key areas:

- Rationale for developing the programme
- Proposed learning outcomes, intended audience, NFQ Award Title, Level, Credits, mode of delivery, module content
- The requirements of the National Framework of Qualifications and QQI policies.
- Costing and resources allocation
- Accessibility considerations for diverse learner needs
- Assessment methods and standards
- Support for learners including academic and pastoral care
- RPL for entry to course
- Suitability for fully online delivery and assessment
- Suitability for blended + on-site delivery and assessment
- Consideration of the balance of synchronous and asynchronous modes
- Access, Transfer and Progression pathways for learners
- Incorporation of Stakeholder feedback

- Alignment with Government policy and strategic educational goals
- Regulatory/Legislative Compliance
- Defined programme Ownership and Management structure

Programme Development Team

The Programme Development Team, appointed by the QA manager, who are tasked with creating the final programme proposal to submit to QQI, may consist of:

- The IDS Course Manager
- Subject Matter Experts
- Digital Education Officer
- Relevant IDS teaching staff
- External experts as required

The Digital Education Officer will review the digital (LMS) design to determine its suitability for delivery and assessment via the Learning Management System, thereby ensuring compliance with the IDS onsite, Blended and online Education Strategy.

Stakeholder Involvement in Design of Programmes

A focus group of Deaf learners or ISL learners is convened to discuss the programme proposal and how it might meet their needs

Where relevant an Employers Forum is assembled to explore how well-structured placement opportunities are designed to give experience in an area relevant to the programme of study. The IDS is well positioned to draw on the experience of relevant employers of Deaf employees in 3 distinct areas:

(1) **Retail sector:** The IDS has a Retail Section, and the Shops Manager has set it as a priority to employ and offer work experience to Deaf people. This will offer valuable feedback to the Employers Forum when required
(2) **IDS Advocacy Department:** A dedicated role exists to engage and advocate with employers on behalf of Deaf applicants seeking positions. Insights from these employers will support the IDS Employers Forum in designing programmes for Deaf learners
(3) **Sector-specific Employers:** IDS will also invite employers to join the Forum from the sector directly related to the programme being developed to participate in the forum.

5. QAC Self- Evaluation and Review of Draft Programme

The completed draft Programme template and supporting documentation are submitted to the QAC who organise a self-evaluation of the draft programme. This entails:

Part A: A peer review by an External Subject Matter Expert(s) against the QQI validation criteria. An additional review is carried out by an external digital expert(s), IDS FET DEC and where appropriate, evaluating the programme against the *QQI Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for providers of Blended and Fully Online programmes (2023)*

Part B: The outcome of Part A is used to review and complete the self-evaluation. If approved by the QAC, it makes a recommendation to the IDS Board. Once approved by the Board, the draft programme is submitted to QQI for validation.

6. IDS Board Review and considerations

The IDS Board is furnished with the evidence generated so far in support of potentially further developing the proposed programme including the analysis of the QA Manager, Proposal Team, CEO, External Subject Matter Expert(s), and QAC. If approved by the IDS Board, the draft programme is submitted to a Programme Development Team (IDS) with the objective of preparing and applying to QQI for programme validation.

3.3 Validation of Programmes

When preparing for QQI Validation, IDS will ensure that the proposed programme is developed using learning outcomes and, aligned with the relevant QQI award standards, and will comply with QQI policies and criteria in the *Policies and Criteria for the Validation of Programmes of Education and Training* and *QQI Policies and criteria for the validation of programmes leading to Common Awards System (CAS) awards,* and policies and criteria for non-CAS awards where relevant. The IDS will further ensure that the proposed programme will comply with *QQI Topic-Specific Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Providers of Blended and Fully Online Programmes.*

IDS will ensure it satisfies the prerequisites for programme validation in relation to having:

- Established quality assurance procedures that comprehend the programme
- Established procedures for access, transfer and progression
- Plan for the protection of enrolled learners
- Confirming suitability for blended, On-site and Online Delivery,
- Consulting, where relevant, with any other providers who wholly or partly provides the programme.

The documented programme will include details on "what is taught, how it is taught, by what means and mode it is taught, by whom it is taught, where it is taught, when it is taught, how it is assessed, to whom it is taught in general terms, who owns the programme, and how the programme is managed and quality assured and by whom" (QQI *Policies and Criteria for the Validation of Programmes of Education and Training, p.12)*

The IDS will ensure that the applicable QQI Programme Descriptor Template is completed, depending on whether the proposed programme is leading to a CAS award or a non-CAS award. The IDS have completed ISL Level 5 validation and aim to develop for validation - Level 6 Minor Awards, will be CAS Awards.

The IDS understands that QQI will only validate a programme where a provider has satisfied it that an enrolled learner who completes the programme will acquire the knowledge, skills or competence to justify the QQI Award sought for the programme.

Responsibility for Programme Development procedures

The following have responsibilities at different stages of the process: IDS QA Manager, FET Management and Administration Team, QAC, CEO, IDS Board

Monitoring of Programme development procedures

The IDS QA Manager monitors the process to ensure it is effective and that a programme proposal is adequately critically evaluated and progressed through the Programme Approval Procedure where applicable. This monitoring includes assessing effectiveness of the delivery and assessment methods to ensure that both Blended + On-site and online delivery continue to achieve the learning outcomes equally for learners.

The IDS QA Manager monitors the process to ensure it is effective and that a programme proposal is adequately critically evaluated and progressed through the Programme Approval Procedure where applicable.

3.4 Programme Monitoring and Review

When a programme is being delivered there are various sources of information used for ongoing monitoring and reviewing its delivery.

Informal learner feedback

Learners are encouraged to provided informal feedback to teaching staff on an ongoing basis. This is informative to IDS FET in ensuring the meeting of learner needs.

Teaching staff Feedback

Teaching staff report any issues of concern to the FET Management and Administration Team and may also raise matters at the Teaching Staff Forum, which meets every 2 months during the academic year (see Terms of Reference of the Teaching Staff Forum, Appendix 8).

Learners Survey

Towards the end of courses, learners complete a formal evaluation survey. The feedback from this is very important for generating actions or improvements for future courses.

FET Team Meetings

FET team meetings are held on a bi- weekly basis and among other matters provide an opportunity to deal with learner issues. The meetings are chaired by the Course Manager, these meetings serve as on-going monitoring of programmes and address matters ranging from learners' engagement, resource needs to assessment.

Data from the Learning Management System (LMS) is also reviewed as part of these meetings, providing insights into learner progress, participation levels, and assessment outcomes, particularly for online and blended delivery.

The meetings provide the data and impetus for programme improvement. Issues that arise from these meetings are reported to the QAC where necessary. They form the basis of future planning and contribute to the annual review of each programme. Issues that arose during the year form agenda items at the end of year review to clarify that corrective action has been taken.

Annual Programme Review

For each QQI programme, IDS FET carries out an annual review which is attended by the Quality Assurance Manager, relevant teaching staff and FET administration team members (see Appendix 10). Learner survey results, completion rates and issues that have arisen at the regular team meeting during the year are reviewed. Any issues arising from the External Authenticator Reports (see below) are also included on the agenda. The agenda for the meeting may include:

- Learner expectation, needs and satisfaction in relation to the programme
- Learner workload, completion rates and progression
- Issues specific to the LMS, including the effectiveness, quality, delivery modalities, impacts and strengths
- How the changing needs of society and the economy are impacting on the course
- The learning environment and learner support issues
- The impact of the latest research on programme content

Data on completion rates is compiled by the FET Course Manager. This is compared to data for previous years and informs decision making for the programme. A report from each programme review is submitted to the QAC, with recommendations for amendments where necessary. Where the QAC approves changes, it monitors their implementation over the following academic year.

Destination Survey

A Destination Survey is carried out 3 months after the completion of a course to check whether those who have completed a course with IDS have progressed to employment or further study, or in the case of ISL courses whether the graduate is now using ISL and for what purposes. This clarifies the benefits gained from attending an IDS course.

External Authentication

External Authentication is an integral part of all QQI programmes in IDS. The role of the External Authenticator is set out in QQI guidelines. An External Authenticator (EA) who has the required qualifications, experience and knowledge is appointed by IDS in accordance with QQI policy. The report generated by the EA feeds into both the annual programme review and the programme self-evaluation described in the next section of this document. Feedback from the EA reports is presented to both the Course Review Meeting and Results Approval Meeting and contributes to developing an improvement plan for the following year.

3.5 Learner Admission, Progression and Recognition of Prior Learning

Learner Admission Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to set out the principles underpinning Access, Transfer and Progression (ATP) at the IDS in alignment with the Qualifications and Quality Assurance Act 2012 and QQI's ATP Policy Restatement Final 2018.

Policy

IDS is committed to providing relevant QQI certified courses in ISL and life skills for Deaf Adults over 16 years of age, and courses for hearing adults over 16 years of age who wish to learn or improve their ISL. Regardless of their background or location within Ireland. They have equal access to support services, resources and opportunities. Applications are processed in a fair and transparent manner on a first come first served basis to ensure equality of access and in accordance with national policies and procedures for Access, Transfer and Progression. Any applicant refused admission has the right to appeal the decision to the IDS QAC.

Procedure

IDS procedures deal with the four aspects set down by QQI

(1) Credit
(2) Entry arrangements,
(3) Information
(4) Transfer and progression routes.

Regarding:

- **Credit:** IDS and all providers of QQI CAS Awards are obliged to offer the credit assigned to the target award by QQI, the default value of which is 10 FET Credits at Level 3 and 10 FET Credits at Level 4 and 15 FET credits at Level 5.
- **IDS FET entry arrangements** concur with QQI policies in that access is open to applicants who have acquired the knowledge skills and competence of the award at the level directly below the one they are applying for. That level may have been achieved by certification or by prior experiential or work-based learning, which IDS recognises for entry when demonstrated in a satisfactory manner at interview.
- **Information** published on the IDS website on all courses offered will state clearly: Name of the Awarding Body, Award Title, Award Type and NFQ Level of the target award, as required by QQI. Published information will set out:

(a) arrangements for entry and the knowledge, skills and competence needed as a basis for successful participation

(b) an explanation of how the interviewer will assess the learner's prior knowledge, skills and competence where the learner does not have relevant certification for entry to the programme

(c) IDS will publish information to clarify that, and what learners with additional needs and those whose first language is not English are accommodated

(d) clearly states that the IDS is committed to accommodating diversity and treats all applicants equally regardless of gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race, ethnicity, membership of the Traveller community and socio-economic status.

(4) Transfer and progression routes: the IDS scope of provision is currently QQI Level 3, Level 4 and level 5. Information provided by IDS will make explicit that those who successfully complete Level 3 are eligible to progress to Level 4 in that field of learning in IDS, while part-completion of a Level 3 or Level 4 in IDS may qualify the learner to transfer to another course at the same level in IDS as transfer means moving to a programme at the same NFQ Level. The IDS will also assist individual learner at Level 4 to progress to Level 5 courses in the relevant field of learning (see 3.3.3 below)

Providing they meet the entry requirements, access to ISL Level 3 to 5 is also available for corporate groups. Since the ISL Act commenced in December 2020, all state organisations have legal responsibilities regarding the use of ISL. Hearing employees who have learned ISL can support Deaf jobseekers and facilitate better promotion opportunities for Deaf staff in inclusive workplaces. The IDS provides ISL courses for organisations to assist them in meeting the needs of colleagues, Deaf employees and for staff dealing with clients.

Target Learner Groups, Entry Requirements and Fees Information

IDS FET will clearly communicate who the target learner groups are for its programmes of education and training. This will include details on funding/fees.

Deaf Adult courses are available to Deaf and Hard of Hearing applicants. All Deaf Adult courses are taught through Irish Sign Language by professional teachers who have expertise in a specific subject.

IDS Deaf Adult courses are free of charge and funded by SOLAS. Regarding ISL courses for hearing adults, the teacher costs are paid by SOLAS as the teachers are Deaf, while additional overheads are funded by a small charge to learners.

Fees, if any, are listed as part of programme information. QQI ISL courses for the hearing community are also currently offered at Level 3 and Level 4, with Level 5 being introduced in

September 2025. Detailed information is also available on the IDS website. Courses are run over 15 weeks for 1.5 - 2 hours per week. The course fee, which is available as part of programme information on www.irishdeafsociety.ie includes the examination fee for QQI certification.

Course fees are refundable only if a scheduled course does not go ahead.

Information provided on the QQI Level 3 "Irish Sign Language I" course explains that the course is suitable for beginners or those who have some ISL and for Hard of Hearing people to enable learners to be more involved with the Deaf community. The course information provided explains that as ISL has its own grammar and structure the QQI Level 3 module content is aligned with the Common European Framework of Languages Level A1. (Beginners) and A2 (Waystage). Learners are taught familiar everyday expressions and phrases of ISL such as daily greetings, social courtesies, food and drink, and simple signs for work, education, and social life. On successful completion of the module learners can progress to the QQI Level 4 ISL 2 module, while IDS is developing ISL Level 5 and Level 6 modules for further progression.

The IDS website will continue to give detailed information on the QQI Level 4 ISL 2 module. This is a pre-intermediate course where participants learn to understand sentences and frequently used expressions in ISL related to areas of everyday life. Those who complete the course will have a degree of fluency in ISL and be able to engage in conversation with ISL signers. The entry requirements for Level 4 are either to have successfully completed QQI Level 3 ISL 1 or to demonstrate an equivalent level of ISL skill.

The IDS website provides detailed information on the QQI Level 5 ISL 3 module. This is an intermediate course for learners who have completed QQI Level 4 ISL 2, or who can demonstrate an equivalent level of knowledge, skill, and competence in ISL through IDS FET's Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) procedures. Learners who complete the course will be able to communicate successfully at an intermediate level.

Enquiry and Application

The admission process begins when an applicant makes an enquiry. Any prospective learner seeking information or clarification is invited on the IDS website to email education@irishdeafsociety.ie

The application form is available on the IDS website, along with course information and entry requirements when courses are launched each term.

Interview

When potential applicants are satisfied that they have sufficient information on the course and have clarified the suitability of the course for them, they submit a completed application form. An interview is then arranged with the course co-ordinator and places offered to suitable applicants

Appeal of refusal to enrol procedure

Where an applicant has been refused admission, they have the right to appeal to the QAC as follows:

(i) the applicant writes to the QA Manager setting out the grounds for the appeal.

(ii) The QA Manager acknowledges the appeal and informs the applicant they will bring the appeal to the QAC.

(iii) The QAC considers all relevant information and instructs the QA Manager to communicate their decision to the applicant.

Information on how to appeal a refusal to enrol is available on the IDS website.

Learner Induction

IDS FET will ensure all learners have access to induction at the beginning of QQI programmes, carried out by the teaching team. Learners are guided through the Learner Handbook. The topics to be covered in the induction include:

- **Welcome and general introduction to IDS**
  - Information on Name of the Awarding Body, Award Title, Award Type and NFQ Level of the target Award

- **Programme Structure**
  - Outline of the curriculum to be followed, duration and dates of course
  - Blended and On-site Learning components
  - Inform synchronous and asynchronous learning activities

- **Learner supports and Requirements**
  - Learner supports including Technical Skills required for Blended and fully Online, and Onsite
  - Navigation of learning Management System (LMS)
  - Online Library Access

- **Policies and Guidelines**
  - Learner Code of Conduct
  - Equality Policy
  - Health and Safety
  - Complaints Procedure

- **Assessments and Academic Integrity**
  - Assessment methods for each module and submission dates

- Appeals procedure
- Reasonable accommodations in assessment
- Plagiarism policy

3.6 Progression

IDS FET will ensure that learner progression pathways are identified, developed and communicated to learners.

ISL education programmes will facilitate progression in two ways. They educate Deaf people to increase their skills and opportunities and at the same time educate the hearing community and State agencies to actively include a marginalised community in Irish society. Language is a key barrier to the successful education of the Deaf when courses and classes are not provided in ISL. It is also a barrier to social inclusion when the Deaf are unable to communicate with wider Irish society. IDS courses and programmes, in teaching ISL to the hearing community at large and to State organisations, not only facilitate further education and training for participants, but in addition create real opportunities for acceptance, inclusion and success for Deaf people in lifelong learning, employment and the community.

IDS FET will continue to actively encourage learners to continue in the learning process and to progress to awards at a higher level both within and outside IDS. Information is provided to learners on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ), and how they may achieve a higher level on the framework.

An internal progression from QQI Level 3 ISL 1 to QQI Level 4 ISL 2 is in place for those who achieve Level 3 certification, and from QQI Level 4 ISL to Level 5 ISL, while IDS aims to provide QQI Minor Awards in ISL Level 6 soon, to meet increasing demand.

Graduates from IDS courses have gone on to study on the Deaf Studies Level 8 Degree in Trinity College Dublin and can progress from there to a master's degree Level 9 and a PHD Level 10. The recently launched B.Ed. (ISL) in DCU for primary teaching is the first of its kind in Ireland and another possible route for IDS students.

The ISL (Irish Sign Language) curriculum is currently being developed by the NCCA (National Council for Curriculum and Assessment). This will be the first time that an ISL curriculum is formally introduced in Ireland. This development presents another pathway for IDS learners, supporting career development in ISL education.

IDS FET will continue to inform Learners about other options, such as to pursue careers in linguistics, psychology, interpreting, cultural studies, healthcare, and social work.

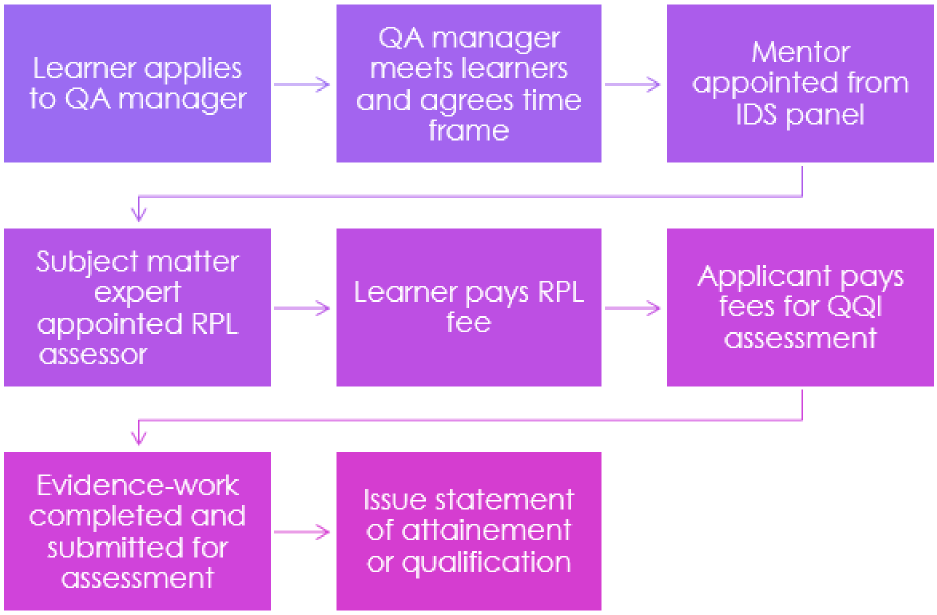
3.7 Recognition of Prior Learning

IDS views Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) as part of a general movement to improve access to vocational education and training and as a support to national policies on access, transfer, and progression. RPL has 3 distinct applications:

a. RPL for entry. Where the learner cannot evidence meeting access requirements by normal means, they may be assessed via the IDS RPL process.
b. RPL for Advanced Entry/Exemption. A learner may gain advanced entry to a programme (through exemption from a module or assessment).
c. RPL for a full award. A learner may achieve a full award without attendance or assessment (based on a portfolio of evidence that would be evaluated through RPL procedures).

Learner eligibility/application for RPL for entry and for Advanced Entry/ Exemption is conducted at interview by the interviewer who is a Subject Matter Expert. If eligible, they will begin the RPL process outlined below.

It is the policy of IDS to support learners seeking accreditation for a minor award in Irish Sign Language through recognition of prior learning. For example, if a learner or prospective learner has never formally studied ISL Level 3 but believes they had the required standard to achieve that award, then IDS would support that learner if RPL approval assisted the learner in progressing. The process involves (a) appointing a mentor with appropriate expertise (b) collecting the relevant learner evidence portfolio which is then assessed by an assessor with experience in the delivery and assessment of the relevant module (c) applying internal verification and external authentication procedures for normal assessment.



THE PROCEDURES FOR APPLYING FOR RPL ARE AS FOLLOWS:

(1) Having identified the ISL award for which they wish to seek recognition, the learner should formally write to the IDS Quality Assurance Manager requesting IDS to facilitate the RPL process. Where possible IDS will facilitate the process, but timing may depend on resource availability.

(2) Once facilitation has been offered the learner should make an appointment to meet the QA Manager to agree a general timeframe for the process.

(3) The QA Manager selects a specialist mentor from the IDS panel and informs the learner that the mentor will make contact. The learner agrees to pay the appropriate fee at this stage.

(4) Once appointed the mentor will call on a subject matter expert in IDS as RPL assessor.

(5) Discuss and agree type of evidence that will be required for the process with RPL Assessor

(6) The learner will be required to register with QQI and pay the appropriate fee

(7) The evidence-work when completed should be presented for assessment.

(8) Issue statement of attainment and / or qualification.

In 2021 Education and Training Boards Ireland (ETBI) published an evaluation report on "Tobar", the RPL pilot project implemented by the Irish Defence Forces in conjunction with 10 ETBs in recent years. It provides valuable guidance and advice for developing RPL for certification. It emphasises the importance of training for the RPL mentor. It also points out that the RPL process itself may be a learning experience in its own right for those learners who do not have prior experience of preparing a portfolio, and so attention to that aspect by the mentor would be crucial (*Evaluation of Tobar-a pilot project in the Recognition of Prior Learning*, Cathal de Paor, ETBI, 2021).

3.8 QQI Certification

IDS learners on QQI accredited courses, receive certification from QQI outlining the qualification gained including the level, the status and content of the studies that were pursued, following successful completion of the assessment process.

3.9 Facilitating Diversity

Policy

IDS policy is to provide additional support where possible to learners with particular needs, for example Deaf/Blind learners or wheelchair users. IDS is very aware that many Deaf learners have had a negative experience of education in the past, so great sensitivity is exercised in assessing their needs. The IDS is committed to accommodating diversity and treats all applicants equally regardless of gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race, ethnicity, membership of the Traveller community and socio-economic status.

Procedure

- Applicants are invited to advise IDS of any special needs on their application form
- Details of a specific need are discussed further at interview
- The necessary arrangements are put in place by IDS where possible
- When a specific need is identified in class by the class teacher only after the course has commenced, the Course Manager discusses the need in more detail with the learner and puts the appropriate arrangements in place where possible.

Responsibility for implementing Learner admission, progression, and recognition procedures

The IDS Deaf Adult Course Administrator, the IDS ISL Course Administrator and the IDS Course Manager are responsible for implementing all aspects of the admissions process.

The IDS QA Manager is responsible for administering the Admissions Appeal procedure and the RPL request for certification procedure.

Monitoring

The QA Manager is responsible for monitoring admissions, progression and recognition and reports to the QAC.

4. Staff Recruitment, Management and Development

4.1 Staff Recruitment

Purpose

This policy outlines the Organisation's commitment to compliance with the Employment Equality Acts, 1998-2015, by providing equality of opportunity in our recruitment procedures.

Scope

This policy applies to all applicants for employment with the Organisation and to existing Employees applying for internal positions in the Organisation. Anyone involved in recruitment and selection on behalf of the Organisation is expected to comply with the provisions of this policy

Policy

This Organisation is committed to providing equality of opportunity with respect to vacancies that arise. As such, the Organisation strives to ensure a recruitment process free from any form of illegal discrimination. Recruitment decisions will be taken without reference to an applicant's gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, age, disability, race, religion, or membership of the Traveller community, unless these are legitimate requirements for the post as permitted in the relevant legislation. In order to source the best candidates, selection criteria will be based on the skills, qualifications, and experience necessary for successful performance in the role.

Teaching Staff

All ISL teachers at IDS must be graduates of the Level 8 bachelor's degree in Deaf Studies from Trinity College Dublin, the only provider of this qualification in Ireland. If a comparable qualification becomes available in the future, IDS will review and consider it for eligibility.

All teaching at IDS is conducted in ISL or through ISL, making it a highly specialised environment. Hearing teaching staff are also required to be fluent in ISL to ensure full accessibility and inclusion in the classroom.

Teaching staff refers to both or either salaried teacher and independent contractors, with terms of employment clearly outlined based on the nature of the role and agreed upon at the time of recruitment.

Recruitment Procedure

The steps in the recruitment process are:

- The CEO and FET Managers identify the skills, knowledge and qualifications needed for the proposed role
- Job specification giving details of the role, duties and responsibilities, candidate profile, with information on how to apply and closing date is drafted following above consultation process
- Draft job specification reviewed by IDS HR partner - IDS will engage external HR partner specialising in recruitment to support recruitment as may be required from time to time to ensure compliance with all legislative and regulatory requirements.
- Once reviewed the position is advertised publicly
- After the closing date applications are reviewed by the relevant internal manager and shortlisted where necessary
- Interview dates and times are arranged, and an interview panel appointed, ensuring a gender balance and a balance of Deaf and hearing membership of the interview panel. It is the responsibility of the chairperson of the interview panel to ensure that each panel member is aware of good practice and their responsibilities under equality legislation
- For teaching staff recruitment, appraisal of the teaching ability of candidates and their knowledge of the assessment process is a key part of the interview.
- For both FET staff and teaching staff recruitment, the most suitable candidate is selected for the position, and where applicable, a reserve panel is drawn up in order of merit.
- Onboarding and Training commences

Recruitment Process

Responsibility

The CEO, FET Course Manager and FET QA Manager have responsibility for FET staff recruitment.

Monitoring

The FET QA Manager has responsibility for monitoring the effectiveness of recruitment procedures

4.2 Staff Induction

The induction process aims to provide the new teacher or staff member with the information necessary for them to work effectively and efficiently. Each new staff member undergoes induction on both a one-to-one and group basis. The new member is introduced to the key personnel of IDS and its policies and procedures. An introduction to the ICT systems and technology that operates in IDS is provided by the FET team, ensuring that new tutors are capable and confident in delivering online instruction.

A new teacher is guided through the Teaching Staff Handbook which includes the following topics:

- CEO’s welcome
- Teacher ‘s timetable

- Professional Conduct
- Classroom management
- Materials and equipment
- Learner Supports
- Class registers
- Schemes and Records of Work
- The Assessment Process
- Team Meetings
- Absences of a Staff Member
- Health and Safety

Following induction each new staff member is allocated a mentor to support their professional development and assist them in finding their way around the IDS systems. The Teaching Staff Handbook is updated each summer. Existing staff are given a copy of the Handbook at the start of each academic year to ensure they are aware of any updated policies and procedures.

4.3 Staff Development

Staff Development Policy

IDS is fully committed to the continuous development of its staff to ensure that the organisation maintains adaptability and flexibility in responding to the needs of learners and society.

Procedure

Responsibility for identifying teaching staff training and development needs and opportunities is shared on the one hand by the CEO and IDS FET managers, and on the other by individual staff members who should identify their personal training needs. Encouraging individual staff to identify their training needs has long been recognised as good practice. However, training and development initiatives in which IDS invests must always support IDS strategic objectives.

Whole Teaching Staff Professional Development

IDS Management are committed to supporting teaching staff in delivering all programmes effectively across all methodologies and modes of delivery. To achieve this, they are responsible for organising in-service training programmes, which take place each year on pre-planned dates during the academic calendar. These sessions aim to foster continuous learning, collaboration, and practical support to enhance teaching practices. Updates relating to areas such as data protection, QQI, SOLAS, Health, and Safety, ISL are given. Short courses on ICT and specialised technology are also provided to groups of staff as the need arises. Each year, the Further Education Support Service (FESS) offers a calendar of

Professional Development events for teaching staff on relevant topics such as assessment, learner feedback, and programme development. These are available to IDS staff.

Individual Continuous Professional Development (CPD)

Feedback from learners and QQI External Authenticators indicates areas where individual teaching staff members require upskilling. Where individual CPD requirements are identified, arrangements are agreed with line management and the CEO. Once the staff member has undergone the training and development activity, its impact on individual and organisational performance will be measured.

In addition to CPD, a wide range of other developmental methods are employed in IDS. These include coaching by colleagues, on-the- job training, research, conferences, and workshops, visiting other relevant agencies, computer-aided training.

4.4 Staff Communications

Policy

IDS views good communication with staff and all stakeholders as an essential element in the effective running of the organisation. To achieve this IDS is committed to maintaining and supporting a range of communication procedures and processes which aim to

(a) provide adequate information on matters relevant to staff

(b) provide opportunities for staff to have their voices heard in matters relevant to IDS

(c) achieve inclusiveness in decision and policy making.

IDS recognises the potential of and uses Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to support effective communication.

It should be noted that staff meetings for non-teaching staff face an additional challenge in IDS compared to other organisations as some staff are Deaf, while some hearing non-teaching staff are not fluent in ISL. This means that every staff meeting requires two ISL interpreters because an interpreter must take a break after 15 minutes interpreting due to the intensity of the work, which makes staff meetings particularly demanding on resources.

Procedure

The main processes used by IDS for inter-staff communications are:

- Teaching Staff Meetings
- Memos and updates from the CEO
- Microsoft Teams channels and chat facilities
- Staff email

- Induction programme for new staff [see Section 4.2]
- The IDS FET Management and Administration Team provides a report on daily tasks and weekly targets through Microsoft Teams
- Staff Handbook (updated annually)
- Daily meetings with staff
- Bi-weekly FET Management and Administration Team meeting which include course and LMS reviews.
- QQI Course Manager Feedback to teaching staff on reports from External Authenticators which assist staff in affirming areas of good practice and identifying areas for improvement.
- Feedback to QA Manager on effectiveness of QA channels

Responsibility

Responsibility for Staff Communications lies with the FET Course Manager and the FET QA Manager

Monitoring

The FET QA Manager monitors feedback on Staff Communications to ensure that channels are working effectively,

5. Teaching and Learning

5.1 Teaching and Learning

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the quality of teaching and learning in the IDS is open to ongoing improvement and that the teaching style incorporates national and international effective practice.

Policy

IDS is committed to the provision of high-quality learning opportunities to Deaf adults and to hearing adults who wish to learn ISL. IDS encourages flexible, innovative, and inspiring approaches to teaching where each learner is supported in achieving their potential. Effective teaching and learning are supported and promoted by the assessment of learners, which is documented in detail in Section 6 of this Manual. Teaching and learning processes are underpinned by the principles of adult education and best practice in language teaching as ISL is aligned to the goals and curriculum of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFRL).

Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy (TLA):

The IDS FET is a trusted education provider focused on supporting our learners to succeed through strong collaboration with learners and by the dedication of our teaching staff to providing access to learning and assuring a fair evaluation of achievement.

Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy (TLA) at IDS FET is designed to optimise our education vision through Irish Sign language. TLA Strategy is supported by IDS Staff Recruitment and Development processes as detailed in Section 4 of the IDS FET QA Manual, and Programme Development and Programme Monitoring and Review processes detailed in Sections 3.1 to 3.4 of the IDS FET QA Manual.

The key pedagogical and andragogical principles underpinning TLA at IDS FET focus on several areas:

1.Creating a learner centred environment that focuses on the development of every learner's knowledge, skills and competence on the course, and personal development in the social spheres; promoting small class sizes to achieve greater levels of learner engagement; and promoting independent self-directed learning emphasising andragogical approaches. This includes the use of Blended learning and Fully Online learning which allows learners to engage with course content at their own pace and convenience, further promoting autonomy. The IDS FET facilitate self-directed learning by providing additional online learning resources which the learner can utilise outside of class to study on their own. These online resources also facilitate self-assessment, which provides formative feedback, and problem-based learning. IDS FET engages with learners on the ongoing improvement and support of their learning journey through learner surveys, the Student Council and learners' representation on the QAC.

2.Empowering and Motivation of Lifelong learners. Both pedagogy and andragogy recognise the importance of empowering and motivating for learning. IDS FET accordingly **(a)** ensures learning materials are relevant to adult learners, based on real life, learner needs and context, to maximise learner interest **(b)** IDS recognises that adult learners are self-motivated in that they invest their scarce time with the objective of upgrading their lives or personal development, and so are not dependent on the teacher, who rather facilitates their learning (c) *" learning by doing"* is recognised as important, and thus active learning in class further motivates learners, while planning and preparation of a variety of timed class activities by the teacher maximises learning opportunities and helps meet different learning styles **(d)** andragogy recognises that adult learners have wide experience already, and so IDS teachers are aware they need personalised learning that would help them enhance their skills. To support this, Blended and Fully Online approaches are used to empower learners by offering flexibly how, when and where learning takes place with varying schedules and responsibilities, making it easier for them to stay motivated and engaged throughout their learning journey.

3. Inclusion and Diversity. IDS FET by its very nature strives to be inclusive. Breaking down barriers to learning is at the heart of teaching in the IDS which caters for a marginalised community. It puts into practice Universal Design for Learning (UDL), which is seen as best practice. As part of this, IDS integrates Blended and Fully Online Learning options, which can support learners who have mobility and geographical or scheduling challenges. These options can be adapted with accessibility tools and formats to ensure inclusivity and meet learners' needs. In addition, the IDS provides flexible and personal education for a diverse range of learners at each stage of engagement which includes developing different teaching and learning approaches on an ongoing basis. For example, teaching ISL to a Deafblind person, who has neither sight nor hearing, requires the teacher to provide tactile learning by touching the hand and back of the learner for the learner to learn signs. The latest example of IDS inclusive policy is the response to the needs of Deaf Ukrainian adults, recently arrived in Ireland. IDS FET has very quickly overcome the challenges in providing ISL classes for this cohort of learners to assist them integrate in Ireland. The Learner Support Plan Form in Appendix 2 of the IDS QA Manual details how the needs of learners with additional needs are met.

4. Innovative approaches to teaching and learning are essential at IDS. Andragogy emphasises that adult learners are already empowered to adapt to new experiences, unlike younger learners, since an innovative mind set takes time and experience to develop. The IDS recognises that Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) is seen as crucial in national and international best practice.

To support this, the Digital Education Officer has developed the customised IDS LMS, along with online materials and resources. These resources for the foundation of IDS's Blended and Fully Online Learning models, which offers flexible, accessible and inclusive learning opportunities for all learners. The DEO works closely with teaching staff to continuously enhance online content, delivery methods and assessment processes. In addition, the Digital Education Officer is supported and guided by the IDS Digital Education Committee which includes experts from Ireland and abroad, to advise on national and international best practices in digital education delivery.

Consistency and transparency. Andragogy stresses that learners should be involved in the planning and evaluation of their learning. This principle is implemented in the IDS in that learner feedback is collected through various channels, and the learner voice is represented through the Student Council and the learner representatives on the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC). Learner feedback to teachers, FET Administrators and Management is monitored on an on-going basis at the Bi-weekly Meetings of the FET Management and Administration Team, which facilitates a very quick response on any issue that arises in teaching and learning. The learner surveys, early in the course and after the completion of the course, are also carefully monitored to ensure the learner voice is noted. Furthermore, the QA Manager is required to report on the Learner Surveys and learner feedback to the QAC. The QAC may recommend action plans to respond to learner suggestions and concerns and monitors the implementation of such action plans.

As part of our commitment to transparency and learners' engagement, IDS FET ensures that BLFOL environments incorporate the same feedback mechanism as in person learning by providing opportunities for real time feedback, participating in surveys and engage in discussion forums. This ensures all learners, regardless delivery of mode, experience transparency and consistency.

Quality assurance of assessment. IDS FET is committed to the principle of valid, transparent, consistent, fair, effective, quality assured assessment. All examiners and all staff involved in designing and moderating assessments have a duty to follow these principles of assessment, which are designed with reference to QQI *Quality Assuring Assessment Guidelines for Providers, Revised 2013:*

1. Assessment instruments must be fair. They must be inclusive, recognising that different people can have different learning needs, styles and approaches. Assessments must be appropriately challenging assessment instruments to facilitate students to demonstrate learning outcomes

2. Assessment instruments must be consistent.

3. Assessors must have the necessary competence and expertise to set and grade assessments.

4. Assessors must declare any conflict of interest (actual or potential, real or apparent) if he or she were to act as an assessor in a particular situation [and] should neither act nor be required to act as an assessor in that situation.

5. Assessment instrument design, setting and grading must be objective and transparent (includes internal verification and external authentication)

6. Assessment of learning must be transparent. Learners must be informed about how and why they are assessed (QQI 2013) with specific reference to learning outcomes being assessed by an assessment instrument.

7. Assessments must be devised to incorporate formative and summative feedback mechanisms.

8. Learners must be made aware of (and follow) assessment and examination regulations.

9. Assessment strategies across modules on a programme must be coordinated by the Programme Co-ordinator and assessors at Programme Review meetings (includes assessment sequencing to ensure learner work-load management)

10. Learners should be involved in the periodic review of assessment procedures (QQI 2013).

These assessments principles are applied consistently across all mode of delivery. Assessments instructions in online context are design to uphold the same standard of fairness and validity and transparency. Online formative assessments such as quizzes, discussion posts, and interactive activities are integrated to promote continuous learning engagement and allow feedback.

Details of IDS FET summative assessment procedures are given in Section 6 and Appendix 1 of the IDS FET QA Manual. Formative assessment is on-going during courses. Teachers regularly set homework and provide online quizzes and videos to support self-direct learning. Learners' answers provide an opportunity for feedback to enhance learning. The learner can request teacher assistance with any parts they are unable to complete. Feedback is given on summative assessment submitted during the course to all learners to ensure consistency.

Engagement with External Stakeholders

IDS FET works continuously to strengthen our relationship with the Centre of Deaf Studies, TCD, the Council of Irish Sign Language Teachers, The European Network of Sign Language Teachers and other further and education providers to ensure national and international standards and best practice are maintained. We further enhance our programmes through engagement with employers when developing our programmes so that we continue to meet the industry requirement for employment of Deaf learners. The collection of learning data and data analysis enables IDS FET to better understand the learner's needs and inform programme development and design.

5.2 Provider Ethos that Promotes Learning

All learning and teaching practices in IDS are learner centred, aiming to engage students emotionally and socially as well as cognitively. A learner centred approach encourages the fostering of successful interpersonal relationships between teachers and learners, and an appreciation and respect for diversity and difference.

This approach includes maintaining strong communication and support for learners learning remotely or through BLFOL, IDS is committed to ensuring all learners, regardless of mode of delivery, experience meaningful interaction, timely feedback and a sense of connection with their teacher and peers.

Procedure

Teaching in IDS, based on current best practice in Ireland, is guided by a professional code of practice which incorporates a code of ethics and a code of conduct. This code draws on the *Teaching Council Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers*, Updated *2nd edition 2016.*

Code of Ethics

The ethical values that underpin the standards of teaching in the IDS FET are respect, integrity, trust, and care.

Respect: teaching staff uphold human dignity and promote equality, personal development, cultural values, diversity, and social justice. They respect the individuality and specific needs of students. They are committed to accommodating diversity including differences arising from gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race, ethnicity, membership of the Traveller community and socio-economic status.

Integrity: teaching staff exercise integrity by conducting their professional commitments, responsibilities and actions with honesty and reliability.

Trust: teaching staff relationships with students, colleagues, IDS FET management and the public are based on trust, which embodies fairness, openness, and honesty. Teaching staff should work to maintain a culture of mutual trust and respect in the IDS FET, and to uphold the reputation and standing of the IDS.

Care: teaching staff practice is motivated by the best interest of the students entrusted to their care. Staff should take all reasonable steps in relation to the care of students under their supervision, to ensure their safety and welfare.

Code of Conduct

- Teaching staff are expected to maintain the highest standards of professional behaviour. They should respect the privacy of others, and the confidentiality of information gained in the course professional practice. They should refer matters of concern regarding student welfare to the IDS FET Management team.
- While encouraging a positive teacher /learner relationship, teaching staff should be aware of professional boundaries with students.
- Teaching staff should communicate effectively with students, colleagues, IDS FET Management and others in the IDS in a manner that is professional, collaborative, supportive and based on trust and respect.

- Staff should ensure that any communication with students, colleagues, management, and others in IDS is appropriate, including communication via electronic media such as e-mail, texting, and social networking sites.
- Teaching staff should ensure that they do not knowingly access, download or otherwise have in their possession while engaged in IDS FET activities, inappropriate materials/images in electronic or another format.
- Teaching staff should be aware of, and work within the framework of relevant legislation and regulations

Working with colleagues: Teaching staff should

- Work in a collaborative manner with students, colleagues, IDS FET Management and the wider IDS staff in seeking to effectively meet the needs of learners.
- Work with teaching colleagues in the interests of sharing and developing good practice and maintaining the highest quality educational experience for students.
- Co-operate with QQI requirements and other educational and support services as appropriate.
- Engage with the planning and implementation of curriculum as required by IDS FET.

Professional Practice: teaching staff should

- Maintain high standards of practice in relation to planning and preparation, student learning, assessing, and providing feedback.
- Develop teaching, learning and assessment strategies that support the differing needs of learners in a way that respects the dignity of all learners.
- Create a learning environment where students can become active agents in the learning process and develop lifelong learning skills.
- Reflect on their own practice and change teaching methods, where necessary, to achieve the best outcomes for learners.
- In the context of mutual respect, be open and responsive to constructive feedback regarding their teaching practice, and to seek appropriate support and advice, if necessary.

Lesson preparation

Preparation is an essential part of teaching. Staff should have a lesson plan for each session setting out the learning objective and outcomes to be achieved, the range of activities planned for learners, strategies to engage learner interest and to encourage interaction.

IDS FET Lesson Plan Template

Class	
Date	
Title of Module	
Lesson Aims/Objectives	
Lesson Outcomes What the learner should be able to do at the end of lesson **Evidence:** How will you know learners have achieved the aims of the lesson	
Sequence of Lesson Activities and time for each activity • *Warm Up/Lead In* • *Presentation* • *Practice* • *Ending the Lesson*	

Methodologies used	
Materials/Resources used	
Reflection post-lesson: what worked well/ what needs improvement	

Create an effective learning environment for onsite and online learning

Elements of effective further education teaching include:

(1) checking learner knowledge, skill, and competence from the previous session.

(2) setting clear learning objectives at the start of the lesson for both onsite and LMS.

(3) eliciting learners existing knowledge about what they know about the new subject matter rather than assuming they don't know it.

(4) encouraging learner questioning and feedback throughout lesson.

(5) using a variety of teaching methods to cater for different learning styles and to ensure that all learners are engaged using a range of instructional strategies.

(6) structuring the lessons into manageable sections to maximise learning opportunities to optimised attention and retention.

(7) managing the learning environment for respect and focus to ensure no learner takes from the rights of others to learn.

(8) checking, prior to the commencement of the lesson, that the Onsite or Online learning environment is fit for purpose. The teacher checks that onsite classroom has proper lighting, acceptable standard regarding ventilation, light, heating and functioning equipment. For online delivery this means verifying stable internet access, testing visual tools, ensuing accessibility features are enabled, confirming all online materials and resources are prepared, uploaded and available.

(9) reflecting at the end of the lesson on what went well, and what needs improvement.

5.3 National and International Effective Practice

All IDS ISL courses are mapped to the CEFR, so teaching and learning are built around the idea of communicative competence and seek to develop functional communication skills in learners. Opportunities for interaction and authentic meaningful communication are facilitated and always encouraged in class. ISL learning is seen as a process which grows out of interaction between learners, teachers, texts, onsite, blended and fully online activities. Learning and teaching methods include

- Encouraging basic conversation in ISL
- Group discussions in ISL between peers or teachers
- Interactive tasks such as Role play, describing scenes, signing narratives
- Extensive use of materials and recorded ISL video clips, video assignments to ensure the contemporary focus of the curriculum
- Emphasis is placed on the student's own interests and thus signs that are central to the learner's experience are utilised.
- "Self-study" provides access to internet resources with backup guidance and support

As an example of alignment to the CEFR, the curriculum for QQI ISL Level 3 covers the topics: Personal Identification. Home and Environment, Daly Life, Entertainment, Travel, Relationships and Social Situations, Health, Education, Shopping, Food and Drink, Services, Places, Weather, Language and Culture. This will enable learner at ISL Level 3 to introduce themselves and ask each other about personal details, and to understand frequently used expressions related to the topics listed.

Teaching and Learning in the IDS will continue to benefit from collegial relationships with other institutions such as the Centre for Deaf Studies, TCD. The expertise of these TCD staff and their knowledge of current international best practice in Deaf studies is an asset to the IDS.

IDS FET will continue to maintain and build collegial relations with other related institutions. In October 2021, the IDS established its Digital Education Committee, chaired by the IDS Digital Education Officer, to advise on best practice in Ireland and internationally in digital teaching and learning [see Terms of Reference of the Digital Education Committee, Appendix 9]. The Digital Education Officer has developed a customised Learning Management System (LMS) and digital resources which enhance online teaching and learning in the IDS. The IDS will continue to develop all such systems, digital and otherwise, which help to enhance teaching, learning and assessment at IDS FET.

5.4 Learning Environments

IDS FET will continue to ensure that both the programme level and each programme learning environment are appropriate whether onsite, blended, or fully online as designed to be appropriate, accessible, and supportive of learners' success. This includes maintaining acceptable standards in onsite classroom spaces, while in online learning settings, IDS FET carefully balances in-person and digital components to support flexibility, meaningful interaction, and continuity. IDS FET provides a dedicated Learning Management System (LMS), offering structured content, interactive resources, and consistent teacher engagement through live online classes. IDS FET continuously monitors and adapts the learning environment across all formats based on feedback from learners and other stakeholders, to ensure a positive and inclusive learning experience for every learner.

Online Learning Environment

The IDS FET complies with the QQI *Topic Specific Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Providers of Blended and Fully Online Programmes (2023)* to inform practice and process to ensure:

1. **Programme staff are adequately trained** in the use of e-learning technologies and on-going professional training is available to keep skills current.
2. **Technical support** is provided for staff and learners using the IDS virtual learning environment, the IDS LMS
3. **Learners are informed** at the start of each programme about the technical requirements and digital competencies needed to participate in online modules.
4. **Training is provided to learners during induction,** including practical guidance on navigating the LMS and using online tools effectively.
5. **Arrangements are made to support online access**, such as providing loan devices to learners without access to a suitable PC or laptop at home.
6. **All online learning activities are mapped** to programme and module learning outcomes
7. Learners are made aware of **IDS E-Safety for Learners Statement** which outlines expectation and support for safe online engagement.
8. **Compliance with data security and GDPR** requirements is maintained.
9. **All online content is regularly reviewed and updated**, to maintain relevance and accuracy.
10. **Feedback from learners and teaching staff** on the effectiveness of synchronous delivery and online learning is monitored
11. **Feedback from learners and teaching staff on** the effectiveness of **asynchronous information** provided is monitored.

BLENDED AND ON-SITE (FACE TO FACE) LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

In relation to the learning environment for Blended and face-to-face classes, IDS regularly reviews the effectiveness of its premises, equipment, and facilities to ensure they meet the required standard. Classrooms are carefully monitored to ensure lighting, heat, ventilation, and furnishings are conducive to learning, and that the necessary ICT and audio-visual equipment is available. The Course Manager completes a facilities checklist to ensure the compliance of learning environments.

IDS, occasionally, delivers its courses at venues outside Dublin. Equal attention is paid to the quality assurance of the environment of these external centres. For the face-to-face aspect of delivery, the quality assurance is maintained through the following measures:

(1) regular visits to the centres by the FET Course Manager to review the effectiveness of premises, equipment and facilities and ensure upgrading where necessary

(2) monitoring of all IDS learner feedback mechanisms as detailed in Section 11.1 to 11.3

(3) monitoring teacher feedback

(4) addressing to any recommendations in the External Authenticator Reports.

5.5 Learner Complaints

Policy

The IDS is committed to having the highest possible standard of communication with our learners, staff, stakeholders, and the general public. Our aim is to deal with any learner issues that arise before they become complaints. The IDS website sets out the procedures for making a complaint where a learner wishes to do so.

Procedure

All formal complaints received will be acknowledged within seven days, and IDS aim to resolve them within 21 days. If this is not possible, IDS will explain why and provide a new deadline. Initially, the FET Course Manager will attempt to resolve a complaint. If this is not possible, the complaint will be referred to the QA Manager, either by the person making the complaint or by the FET Course Manager. The QA Manager will bring the complaint to the QAC who will consider the complaint and make a recommendation. If a complaint is not resolved to the satisfaction of the learner at QAC level, they may appeal to the CEO of IDS who will ensure the complaint is considered at Board level. The CEO will respond within 21 days following consideration by the Board.

IDS FET aims to learn from complaints, uses them to improve, and monitors them at QAC level.

Responsibility

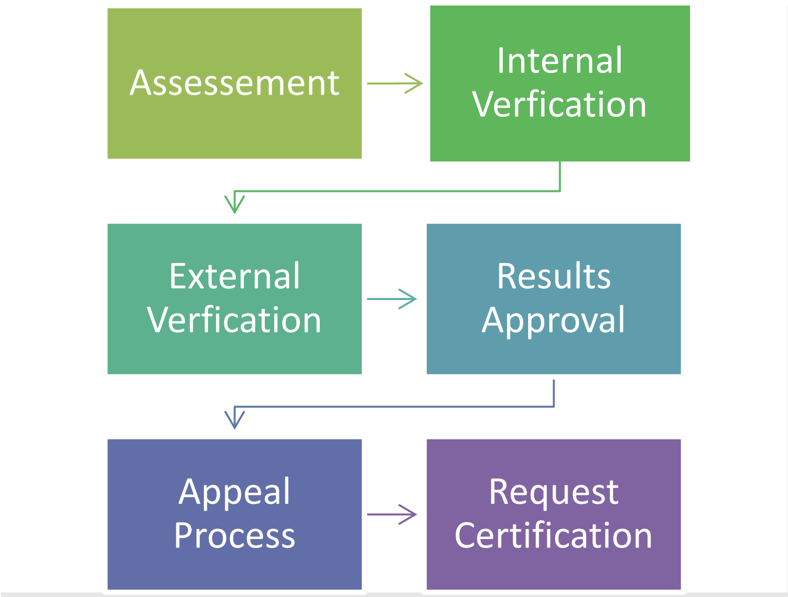
Teaching staff have responsibility for delivery of effective teaching; learners have responsibility for attendance at class and submission of assessments; the Course Manager has responsibility for providing and maintaining a quality learning environment.

Monitoring

The QA Manager monitors feedback on the effectiveness of teaching and learner satisfaction with the learning environment on an ongoing basis. Sections 11.1 to 11.3 set out IDS commitment to self-monitoring and improving the quality of education and training programmes and related services. Furthermore, the learner Complaints and Appeals Procedure detailed in 5.5 ensures a timely response where a learner is dissatisfied with aspects of a course and related services.

6. Assessment of Learning

6.1 Assessment of Learning Achievement



Policy

IDS is committed to the fair and consistent assessment of learners to ensure equal opportunities for all programmes delivered onsite, Blended or Online. The learner's achievement in relation to the standards of knowledge, skills and competence required to achieve a QQI Award shall be assessed by the assessor and the authentication process. These standards are expressed as learning outcomes in the Award Specification for each minor award. Achievement of learning outcomes is evidenced during formative assessments which take place during the programme, and summative assessments which take place during, and at the at end of the programme.

All assessment is underpinned by the principles of validity, reliability, fairness, quality, transparency and recognition of the complementary roles of QQI and the provider. [QQI *Quality Assuring Assessment Guidelines for Providers, Revised 2013}.*

Scope

This policy applies specifically to QQI validated programmes.

Procedures

IDS in its role as a provider of training programmes leading to QQI awards, has put in place an assessment process with the following stages in sequence:

- Assessment
- Internal Verification
- External Authentication
- Results Approval Process
- An Appeals Process
- Requesting Certification

6.2 Assessment Procedures

The assessment process addresses the following elements (1) Planning assessment (2) information for learners (3) assessment deadlines (4) reliability of learner evidence (5) security of assessment related processes and materials (6) the maintenance of learner related records and documentation (7) assessment malpractice (8) reasonable accommodations (9) compassionate consideration (10) repeat of assessment activity

In addition, IDS has put in place validated programmes which meet the requirements of the named award specification to which each programme is designed to lead.

The role of the assessor (teacher, tutor, or course manager) is to evaluate learner evidence and make the assessment decision /judgement on whether the outcomes of knowledge, skills and competence as detailed in the award specification have been achieved.

The learner's responsibilities in relation to assessment are (1) at registration for the programme to commit to the learner contract which outlines their responsibility in relation to meeting assessment deadlines and the consequences of failing to do so (2) to ensure that each assessment submitted that it is their own original work (3) monitoring their assessment schedule, noting relevant deadlines.

The FET Course Manager must ensure that teaching staff are aware of their responsibilities in relation to assessment deadlines.

6.3 Planning Assessment

An Assessment Plan is an IDS requirement for all programmes, coordinated between all teaching staff on a programme and is made available to learners at the beginning of a programme through the learner handbook and at induction. This Plan ensures that assessment is spread out appropriately to avoid bunching of assessments and over-burdening learners by deadlines occurring at the same time across a number of modules, or too close together in a given module.

The assessment for each programme should be planned in advance of commencing learning and assessment activities, based on the assessment techniques set down in in the programme module. This would include planning: a) the range of specific learning outcomes to be assessed b) the assessment techniques and instruments c) the timing of assessment activities d) any deadlines and due dates e) how marks are to be allocated and assessment criteria is to be applied.

6.4 Information for Learners

All relevant information relating to the Assessment Process is made available to learners at the outset of the programme of study and prior to undertaking assessment activities. Learners must be fully aware of the QQI award to which the programme leads and of the assessment and grading requirements. Learners should have access to the following: (a) the relevant Award Specification (b) appropriate information in relation to the assessment techniques (c) IDS FET policy on deadlines and key dates and deadlines for submission of evidence (d) information for learners with disabilities or other special requirements (e) information on the IDS FET Assessment Appeals Process.

6.5 Assessment Deadlines

Assessment must be fair and consistent across all assessment activities for all learners. Accordingly, learners must present their assessment evidence on or before the due date and time.

Applying for Assessment Extension Deadlines/Deferrals

If a learner misses a deadline for submission, then they are required to complete the Assessment Deadline –Extension Application Form and forward it to the FET Course Manager accompanied by any supporting documentation. If a learner has a valid reason, which is accepted by IDS, for a missed or late submission, then the learner is granted an assessment extension/resubmission / resit of examination. Each application is judged on its own merit and may involve consultation with programme teaching staff or IDS management. Where the request is granted, the assessment is graded as normal without penalties.

IDS learners are advised that requests for submission extensions made in advance of the commencement of a course where extenuating circumstances or compassionate considerations apply can more readily be facilitated and can allow an individual assessment plan to be agreed for a learner (see Guideline 9 below on compassionate consideration). The applicant should contact the FET Course Manager in advance of the course providing any documentary evidence available. The FET Course Manager or IDS management may also become aware of cases of extenuating circumstances/compassionate considerations where the learner is unable to obtain documentary evidence. In such circumstances the Course Manager or IDS management may complete a confidential statement for the applicant in support of their request, which is stored by the Course Manager in a secure SharePoint Folder for the External Authenticator.

If the application for an assessment extension is declined, the learner can appeal the decision. The learner must inform the FET Course Manager/teaching staff dealing with the application of their wish to appeal within seven days of receiving the result of their application. The original extension application form is now forwarded to the Quality Assurance Manager along with any additional evidence that was not available for the initial assessment of the Extension Application.

6.6 Reliability of Learner Evidence

It is good practice to establish and implement procedures to ensure the reliability of learner evidence. Where the assessor is not in a direct position to observe the learner carrying out the assessment activity or collecting the evidence first hand, e.g., when a portfolio or project is used, they must be confident in the authenticity and ownership of the learner work i.e., it is reliable learner evidence. This is particularly important when group assessment is used.

The following are ways in which the assessor may ascertain that the learner evidence produced is reliable and genuine. The assessor should where appropriate implement a range of these.

(a) When introducing the assessment, the teacher should discuss with the class what is meant by academic integrity and what it means in the context of the particular assessment.

(b) the standard IDS template for all assignment briefs requires an authorship statement confirming that assessment submitted is the learner’s own original work. In the case of groupwork submissions all learners are required to sign the submission statement to say it is the original work of the group.

(c) questioning; this involves asking the learner to explain and describe part of the evidence. It is important to concentrate on how the evidence was produced. This will enable the learner to show that they were responsible for producing the evidence and will also give the learner the opportunity to apply the knowledge and skills required.

(d) personal log-this is a record of how the learner planned and developed the evidence. A personal log should identify problems and how they were overcome by the learner.

(e) personal statements-a personal statement may be used to explain the actions of the learner in carrying out activities or producing the evidence. Personal statements should be clear and explain the learner’s role and the context in which the evidence was produced. Personal statements can provide evidence of knowledge and understanding.

(f) peer reports - these are especially suitable for group work. Peer reports are reports drafted by group members which can help explain individual involvement in a task or project.

(g) independent testimony - this is a statement produced by an individual other than the assessor, which confirms that the learner has carried out a series of tasks or produced a product. It should record what the learner has demonstrated and corroborate the learner evidence submitted. The identity and role of the individual to provide the testimony for the learner should be agreed in advance between the assessor and the learner. The use of independent testimony is not intended as a mechanism for assessing learner evidence but as a tool to corroborate the reliability of that evidence.

6.7 Security of Assessment-related Processes, Materials and Examinations

Microsoft SharePoint Storage: The IDS uses Microsoft SharePoint as its secure document management and storage system. This platform provides a reliable and secure way to store and manage important documents, ensuring easy access and collaboration while maintaining data security.

Brightspace by D2L Storage offers a cloud-based storage solution designed to support educational institutions and organisations in managing their learning content and data efficiently.

IDS FET Teaching staff can upload various course materials such as PDFs, ISL videos, and presentations directly into the platform, with files securely stored in a scalable cloud infrastructure.

IDS FET Learners data including assessment submissions, grades, discussion posts, and quiz results is safely stored and utilised for reporting and personalized learning experiences.

All Blended Learning and Fully Online assessments are submitted via LMS which provides a streamline process for both learners and teaching staff. Upon submission, learners receive automated notifications confirming receipt. Feedback to assessments is provided directly through LMS, ensure timely and organised responses to submitted work. The system ensures integrity and security of assessments process and provides a centralised location for managing submission and feedback.

To handle ISL media and large files, Brightspace integrates with specialised platforms that host large files externally while keeping them accessible within courses.

The system ensures data security and compliance with standards like GDPR through encryption, secure access, and regular backups.

IDS typically operates within a dedicated environment, ensuring logical segregation and separate management of data and retention policies.

Storage of Non-online Assessment Materials

For face-to-face classes, the IDS FET Manager controls the secure storage of hard copy of learner assessment materials, processes, and student work in the IDS offices in Deaf Village Ireland (DVI) until after the completion of the Appeals process. Teachers keep materials, learner work submitted during the course and records in locked filing cabinets. At the end of the course learner work is submitted and formally signed-in to the Course Manager in a secure office to which the Course Manager controls access for the duration of the Authentication process, and until the Appeals process is complete. The QA Manager monitors this process to ensure it is effective.

QQI Examinations

Security is vital in relation to all aspects of examinations in order to ensure the integrity of the process. The following procedures apply to IDS FET examinations.

An examination provides a means of assessing a learner's ability to recall and apply knowledge, skills and understanding within a set period of time and under clearly specified conditions. Examinations are a form of assessment which normally require a fixed timeframe and an unseen question paper and range of questions. The assessment instrument for examinations is the examination paper i.e., questions or tasks devised for the learner.

When devising an examination, the assessor should ensure that:

- Questions or tasks reflect the learning outcomes as outlined in the Award Specification
- Instructions are clear and unambiguous
- Examinations have a cover page outlining details such as: date, duration, choice, and number of questions
- Answer books/paper for learners to complete their answers should be provided where appropriate
- Confidentiality is maintained during preparation and handling of examination documents
- Groups of learners being assessed at different times are provided with different examination questions
- Specific resources or equipment required are available and in good working order
- The allocation and weighting of marks is clear to the learner
- The learner is aware of the weighting of the examination in relation to the award
- Learners are provided with a quiet environment in which to complete the examination

A clear marking scheme should also be devised which highlights how specific marks are to be allocated.

Examination Procedures

In order to ensure mechanisms are in place for the security, supervision, and integrity of assessment materials, learner assessment documentation/project work submissions, and the maintenance and security of assessment records, IDS FET will ensure that assessment instruments are prepared and distributed in a secure manner to relevant assessment personnel.

Instructions to person(s) coordinating the examinations:

1. Current versions of all assessment materials (Learner instructions, assessment question papers, and marking schemes) are received in good time for assessments and are distributed at the appropriate time. Each learner should receive a copy of their examination timetable via the course tutor and sign to confirm receipt of same. In addition, the Examination Timetable should be posted online and on IDS FET noticeboards where relevant.
2. All assessment materials are maintained securely until the commencement of the assessment.
3. The assessment centre is prepared in accordance with the appropriate requirements prior to the learners' arrival.

4. Only authorised individuals have access to the assessment centre while it is being prepared and during the assessment.
5. Assessments are supervised in accordance with IDS FET Assessment Procedures.
6. Completed assessments are held under secure, confidential conditions for the period specified and suitably disposed of thereafter.
7. Assessment records are stored securely with appropriate backup procedures.

- Assessment answer books and other assessment materials are made available for review during internal verification and external authentication.

Instructions for Examinations Supervisors

1. Where possible assessors should not supervise their own group for an examination.
2. Supervisors should be in the examination centre 15 minutes before the examination is due to commence.
3. Supervisors should receive the examination papers in a sealed envelope from the person designated to coordinate the examination and ensure that there are sufficient examination papers and blank answer books available.
4. The supervisor should check that the details on the envelope match the examination papers enclosed. If a discrepancy occurs, the papers should not be distributed and the person coordinating the Examination should be contacted immediately.
5. If everything is in order examination papers should be distributed and left faced down until the supervisor instructs learners to turn them over when the examination commences.
6. If a problem arises with an examination paper, it should be referred to the person responsible for coordinating the exam.
7. Supervisors must remain vigilant for the duration of the examination and should not read or use headphones while supervising.
8. Supervisors should get each learner to sign an Assessment Attendance Sheet and check the name against the learner photo identification if the learner is not known to them.
9. A note will be made on the Examination Attendance Sheet where a learner's identity cannot be verified and the person coordinating the examinations should be notified.
10. Supervisors should check the completed answer books against the Assessment Attendance Sheet
11. Supervisors should return the papers with the Examination Attendance Sheet in the envelope, sealed to the person responsible for coordinating the examination. Any unused Examination papers and answer books should be included also.
12. Where a suspected incident of assessment malpractice occurs, the supervisor will complete an Alleged Assessment Malpractice Report and submit it to the person responsible for organising the examination.
13. The learner should be informed that a suspected incident of malpractice is being reported and they should be allowed to complete the examination, unless there is an

exceptional reason otherwise (e.g., a student is causing an unreasonable disruption that inhibits other(s) present at the examination centre from completing their assessment).

Instructions for Learners

1. Learners are responsible for noting carefully the date, time, and location for each exam, as listed on the Examination Timetable distributed by the class tutor/ module teacher, and for which the learner signed to confirm receipt.
2. Learners are required to be in the examination centre 10 minutes prior to the commencement of the examination.
3. Learners will not be admitted to the examination centre later than 30 minutes after the commencement of the exam.
4. Learner will not be allowed to leave the examination centre until after 30 minutes from the commencement of the exam.
5. Each learner must sign the appropriate sign in sheet for their group for each examination.
6. Where the learners are not known to the supervisor, identification is required when signing.
7. No books, notes, written materials, mobile phones, or other electronic devices are allowed to be taken into the examination centre, with the exception of open-book examinations.
8. Coats and bags must be left in a designated area of the examination centre and all mobile phones should be switched off.
9. Silence must be observed at all times and learners shall not communicate with or aid another learner.
10. Learners should raise their hand to attract the attention of the supervisor.
11. A learner will not be allowed leave and return to the examination centre unless there is a genuine need, and they are supervised on their return.
12. A learner must raise their hand when they want to leave the examination centre and their answer books must be collected at their desk. If a learner leaves an examination early, the time is noted on the sign in sheet.
13. Learners must ensure that their name is on every piece of evidence handed up. Where more than one answer book is used the learner must indicate this on both books.
14. At the end of the examination learners must stop writing immediately when the supervisor announces that the examination is finished.
15. Learners cannot remove examination papers or answer books from the Examination centre.
16. Learners must remain seated until all the examination papers have been collected.
17. Where there is a suspicion of assessment malpractice the supervisor will inform the learner that the incident will be reported and the learner will be allowed to continue with the examination, unless there is an exceptional reason otherwise (e.g., a student is causing an unreasonable disruption that inhibits other(s) present at the examination centre from completing their assessment) All instances of suspected

reported assessment malpractice will be investigated in accordance with IDS FET Assessment Malpractice procedures.

6.8 Records and Documentation

Assessment evidence, other than examinations, submitted by the learner are recorded as having been received to prevent any disagreement between the learner and the assessor. Learner receipts are the mechanisms which are used to record this.

IDS FET ensures that all assessment, verification records and documentation are available both for internal verification and external authentication.

6.9 Assessment Malpractice (Academic Integrity/Plagiarism)

IDS FET staff emphasise to learners that academic integrity is the commitment to and demonstration of honest and moral behaviour in an academic setting.

While malpractice is rare among Deaf learners and ISL students it is necessary to have a policy and procedures in place to ensure fair and consistent assessment of learners. An assessment system malpractice is any act or practice which brings into question the validity or integrity of the assessment process. In addition to plagiarism, malpractice includes inappropriate behaviour such as

- Impersonation of another learner
- Fabrication of evidence
- Wrongly obtaining secure assessment material (e.g., examinations)
- Disruptive behaviour
- Buying/selling of assignments (contract cheating)

IDS will investigate all allegations of malpractice.

PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is the act of copying, or directly quoting from the work of another without adequate acknowledgement. Many learners entering further education for the first time are unaware of correct procedures for referencing and quoting from other work. Tutorials on this at the outset of courses can help reduce instances of plagiarism. It is important that learners understand what is meant by the term and the seriousness of the act. Where cases of plagiarism arise through poor academic practice with no deliberate intent to cheat it still constitutes a breach of acceptable practice and requires to be appropriately investigated and acted upon. A statement on regulations, guidelines and procedures regarding plagiarism is included in the learner handbook distributed to all learners at the commencement of the course. In addition, all students are required to sign an authorship statement or short declaration that the submission is their own original work which is attached to learner evidence.

Generative AI in Assessments

As with plagiarism, using Generative AI prevents honest assessment of learners' capabilities. Learners have a leading role in terms of their own behaviour in upholding academic integrity and are expected to avoid using AI tools, that compromise integrity.

Plagiarism as a method of cheating is uncommon in the cohort of IDS learners. There are very specific challenges for Deaf learners in relation to written assessments. It must be borne in mind that for these learners, English is a second language and consequently the likelihood that a Deaf learner may copy the expression of thoughts/concepts/facts simply because they are less confident of their own ability to re-express that information in their own words. All assessments submitted electronically will be checked for plagiarism. If plagiarism is detected, IDS will ensure that the learner is made aware of the meaning and implication of plagiarism. Fair and consistent assessment. As stated above, the assessment methodology in terms of technique, weighting, and marking remain unchanged, so there is no perceived impact on the fairness or consistency of assessment occasioned by the transition to online assessment. IDS will continue to adhere to the programme specification as validated with QQI.

Assessments in respect of QQI ISL programmes are visual and require the learner to engage actively in ISL conversations via the Learning Management System, making it extremely difficult to use AI tools. In other instances, assessments are designed to promote academic integrity as part of the IDS culture. These assessments are designed to be appropriate and less susceptible to academic misconduct.

AI sign-language technology is advancing rapidly, with tools emerging that feature avatars capable of converting text into sign language. IDS FET is increasingly aware of the scalable solutions these tools can offer. However, concerns have been raised particularly by the European Union of the Deaf (EUD), with whom IDS is affiliated, regarding the limitations of such technologies. These include a lack of linguistic depth, absence of cultural nuance, and significant risks of inaccuracy in the signs produced. IDS is actively engaging with the EUD to advocate for stronger legal backing, explicit dataset requirements, effective enforcement mechanisms, and Deaf-led governance.

Training is provided to teacher staff to help them recognise and report instances of academic misconduct, including plagiarism and the inappropriate use of AI tools. While the risk of AI misuse is currently low, particularly in visual, conversation-based assessments, FET management remains vigilant to ensure the integrity of all learner's evaluations is maintained.

Investigating alleged plagiarism and use of AI

On completion of the checking of learner evidence, the teacher meets with the learner who may admit or deny that the evidence has been plagiarised. Where the learner admits that plagiarism has taken place, the teacher must determine whether it is a “minor “or “major” offence. In cases of a minor offence a written warning may be sufficient. For a major offence, a penalty is imposed which is normally the award of zero marks for that element of the module. The teacher reports the outcome of the case to the Course Manager at this point. The majority of cases do not go beyond this stage and every effort should be made to resolve cases at this point.

Where malpractice is denied at this point the matter is referred by the teacher to the QA Manager for review and the teacher and the learner may be called to present the basis for their respective positions. In the event, where the learner does not attend, even though they received an invite, that the meeting will proceed in their absence. The QA Manager will make a decision on the case, including a potential sanction. The QA Manager's decision is final and can only be appealed directly to QQI. The QA Manager will present, at least annually, a report on academic malpractice to the QAC who will monitor and advise on the malpractice investigation and sanction system at IDS.

Any such investigation into an alleged malpractice must have due regard to the principles of natural justice. It should not be assumed that an allegation equates to proof of a malpractice, or that an investigation does not disadvantage the person against whom the allegation is made. It is equally important that strict confidentiality is maintained, due to the risk of reputational damage to the learner(s) involved.

6.10 Reasonable Accommodation

Where possible, IDS provides support to learners who present with additional needs and request reasonable accommodations to complete their assessment. The FET Manager meets with the learner. Evidence to support the application is required. Evidence includes but is not limited to the following sources.

- Educational Psychological Reports
- Medical Reports
- Occupational Therapist Reports
- Guidance Counsellor Reports

Supports and Accommodations which may be provided to learners include:

- Separate room to undertake assessment /examination
- Additional time in ISL assessments for those with arthritis in their fingers
- Rest periods during time constrained assessments
- Modified assignments/examination papers
- Scribes/readers

- Sign Language Interpreter
- Access to computer to enlarge type
- Assistive/Adaptive equipment/software

6.11 Compassionate Consideration

IDS FET has put in place procedures to enable learners to apply for compassionate consideration in relation to their assessment. Learners who are prevented from undertaking a specific assessment activity or who feel their performance is seriously impaired because of exceptional circumstances may apply to defer the assessment i.e., to be allowed to complete the assessment activity on another occasion. The following are examples of circumstances under which IDS FET may consider giving compassionate consideration to the learner:

(a) a physical injury or emotional trauma during a period four to six weeks prior to the assessment deadline
(b) a physical disability or chronic or disabling condition such as epilepsy, glandular fever, or other incapacitating illness of the learner
(c) recent bereavement of close family member or friend
(d) severe accident
(e) domestic crisis
(f) terminal illness of a close family member
(g) other extenuating circumstances.

Any procedure in relation to compassionate consideration requires the learner to provide to the Course manager appropriate evidence/documentation e.g., a statement from a medical practitioner. The IDS considers the severity of the circumstances and the nature of the assessment activity in making the decision to grant compassionate consideration.

6.12 Repeat of Assessment Activity

Where a learner is unsuccessful in achieving one minor award at the first attempt due to not successfully completing and passing one element of the assessment, the IDS will allow that learner, on request, to repeat that element of the assessment during the next assessment period. If successful, the new result is added to the learner portfolio which is then submitted to the authentication process.

6.13 The Authentication Process

When the marking and recording of learner evidence is complete at the end of a course, IDS follows QQI requirements in the next 5 successive stages of the assessment process (a) Internal Verification (IV) of results (b) External Authentication (EA) (c) Results Approval (d)

The Appeals Process (e) Request for Certification to QQI. The Further Education Support Service (FESS) developed a Quality Assurance Assessment Toolkit based on QQI documents to support fair and consistent assessment of learners]. IDS has adopted this comprehensive Toolkit to ensure correct procedures in these 5 aforementioned stages of assessment (see Appendix 1)

Template documents provided include:

1. The Teacher /assessor Checklist-Preparing for the Authentication Process template provides a comprehensive tool to ensure all documentation is in place for IV and EA
2. The IV Checklist and IV Report template facilitates the Internal Verifier in conducting their task
3. The EA Toolkit provides templates and information on the role of the EA and for writing the EA Report
4. The Results Approval Tool provides templates for the Results Approval Panel Meeting Report
5. The document in the Toolkit on the Appeals Process details procedures for appeals
6. Appendix 1 in the Toolkit explains the sampling Strategy for Internal Verification that IDS has adopted based on the guidelines provided

Internal Verification Procedures

QQI defines internal verification (IV) as the "process by which the provider's assessment policies and procedures… are monitored by the provider itself". (QQI Quality Assuring Assessment, Guidelines for Providers, Revised 2013)

The IV process involves:

- Verifying that the provider's assessment procedures have been applied across the range of assessment activities
- Confirming assessment results by checking learner evidence exists and marks and grades are recorded correctly

IDS FET will ensure that the following steps are followed:

- Verification that assessment procedures as agreed in IDS FET QA agreement with QQI have been followed for each learner group/component (module) group entered for certification. This includes that the following are available: copy of component specification/s, validated programme module/s, completed provisional results sheet(s)/report(s), assessment brief/s, examination paper/s, marking scheme/s, outline solution/s, assessment plan/s and examination timetable/s
- For ALL learner portfolios – verification that there is a portfolio of evidence for each learner and that result/s are recorded

1. For the sample of learner portfolios, verification that:
    a. Assessment procedures as agreed in IDS FET QA agreement with QQI have been followed for each learner group/component (module) group entered for certification. This includes checking that the evidence in each portfolio matches the techniques in the component specification / validated programme, work is signed by the learner indicating that it is their own work, deadline dates for submission of evidence issued to learners
    b. Marks and grades are recorded correctly and are transferred from learner evidence to marking sheets/provisional results sheets
    c. Percentage marks and grades allocated are consistent with QQI grading bands
    d. For the sample chosen, the internal verifier will indicate that those portfolios have been internally verified e.g., the internal verifier will circle the mark on the provisional results sheet and initial each of the portfolios that have been internally verified
2. Checklists and reports will be completed by relevant staff

External Authentication Procedures

QQI defines external authentication as the process that aims "to provide independent authoritative confirmation of fair and consistent assessment of learners, in accordance with national standards". (QQI Quality Assuring Assessment, Guidelines for Providers, Revised 2013).

Selecting the External Authenticator

IDS FET will select appropriately trained and briefed external authenticator/s.

The external authenticator will moderate results for awards in fields/sub fields in which the authenticator has broad subject matter expertise. Given their professional status it is expected that all external authenticators will possess the expertise necessary to moderate results in general areas, for example, Communications. In selecting an appropriate external authenticator care will be taken by IDS FET to ensure that the authenticator:

- Has technical/subject matter expertise within the appropriate award area/field of learning
- Has experience of delivering programme assessment or work in the industry/field
- Agrees to undertake appropriate training and to attend appropriate briefings
- Has the qualities necessary to interact with learners, assessors, and senior staff members, as appropriate
- Has administrative, digital and I.T. skills
- Can undertake to operate within the code of practice and guidelines issued by QQI, as appropriate
- Is available to IDS FET at appropriate times

- Is independent of the IDS
- Informs the IDS of any potential conflict of interest that may compromise their role

Timeframe for External Authentication

External authentication is part of IDS FET quality assuring assessment process and will take place after the learners have been assessed and after the internal verification process. External authentication will take place before the results approval process is implemented. In planning for external authentication consideration will be given to the following:

- The other assessment related processes: internal verification, results approval, requesting certification and appeals
- IDS FET deadlines and key dates
- QQI certification deadlines and key dates

All major, special purpose and supplemental award areas will have an external authenticator assigned per annum and all minor awards will be authenticated at least once every two years.

Results Approval Procedures

IDS FET has established a Results Approval Process. The purpose of the Results Approval Process is to ensure that results are fully quality assured and signed off by the provider prior to submission to QQI. The Results Approval Process ensures that appropriate decisions are taken regarding the outcome of the assessment and authentication processes. The process must include consideration of the internal verifier and external authenticator reports. In the event that an external authenticator has concerns regarding the results, they will submit a report to IDS FET outlining their concerns and identifying the irregularities found. IDS FET will then instigate appropriate corrective action.

Results Approval Panel

As part of their Results Approval Process, a Results Approval Panel (RAP) must be established by the provider to ensure assessment decisions and results are reviewed, judged and processed in a fair, consistent and transparent manner.

The role of the Results Approval Panel is to:

(1) Meet as required to review and approve assessment results
(2) To review reports of the internal verification and external authentication process
(3) To agree to the submission of final results to QQI to request certification
(4) Identify any issues arising in relation to the results and make recommendations for corrective action.

The membership of the Results Approval Panel may include the IDS FET QA Manager, the IDS Course Manager, assessors and an independent QA expert. The internal verifier and external authenticator reports should be considered by the panel.

Results Approval

Procedures are in place to ensure that results are approved and signed off by the results approval panel. Once the results are approved, they should be immediately

(1) Made available to learners
(2) Submitted to QQI. Learners are given a maximum of 14 days to lodge an appeal, with the deadline date for submitting an appeal included in the Appeals Information letter issued to all learners along with the Statement of results. QQI will issue certificates for all the results received except those flagged as under appeal.

The Appeals Process

IDS FET has put in place an Appeals Process. The Appeals Process will enable the learner to appeal:

(1) The Assessment Process if they perceive there to be irregularities/inequality in its implementation
(2) The assessment results. Only approved results can be formally appealed by the learner.

Therefore, IDS FET will:

(1) Approve all results through the Results Approval Process
(2) Inform learners of the outcome of this process i.e., give assessment result to learners
(3) Provide sufficient time to enable learners to lodge an appeal i.e., a maximum of 14 days should be allowed, with the deadline date for submitting an appeal included in the Appeals Information letter issued to all learners along with the Statement of results.

The appeals procedures involve a review of the Assessment Process for the specific learner concerned including where appropriate the review of learner evidence and the assessment results. The individual/assessor who evaluates a learner appeal should not be the individual/assessor who made the original assessment decision.

The only learner assessment evidence which may be presented by the learner at appeal is that which has already been presented for assessment. New assessment evidence may not be added by the learner for the appeal.

When the learner is appealing the assessment process itself, they should submit evidence/documentation detailing the reasons for their dissatisfaction with the assessment process.

The learner should be informed of the outcome of the Appeals Process within one week of the Appeal decision being issued. Following the completion of the provider's Appeal Process, the results for the learner(s) concerned are forwarded to QQI as the final result. These final results are the basis on which QQI will issue certificates.

Requesting Certification

The outcome of the results approval process is that final results are submitted for the purpose of issuing certificates.

At the point of requesting certification for learners IDS FET will confirm that it has implemented all elements of the authentication process and adhered to all agreed procedures. All appropriate learner data will need to be supplied with the learner results e.g., Personal Public Service Number (PPSN).

QQI will issue certificates to learners once quality assured and fully authenticated results are received from the provider.

Monitoring the Assessment Procedures

The IDS FET QA Manager monitors the assessment process through all the stages. On completion of the assessment cycle the QA Manager writes a report for the QAC giving data on the results, the IV Report, the EA Report, the Results Approval Panel Report, along with any recommendations emanating from the process. Where the QAC approves recommendations, it monitors their implementation in the subsequent academic term.

New assessment instruments

The approval process for new assessment instruments, where suggested, follows the following stages: (1) Justify the proposal by giving the rationale for proposing the new instrument. (2) Develop draft of the instrument (3) Peer-review the draft (4) Have it approved by the QAC, if the proposal involved very substantial change, it will be necessary to liaise with the QQI.

7. Supports for Learners

7.1 Supports for Learners

Policy

The IDS is committed to providing all learners with an accessible and supportive learning environment. The adequacy of the resources available to learners is monitored on an ongoing basis and updated and expanded as necessary to reflect up-to-date approaches and learner needs as identified through learner feedback.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that IDS FET meets learner current needs and responds to emerging requirements.

Procedure

The following are in place:

7.2 Course Administrator

In addition to the subject teacher each class is assigned to a course tutor and administrator, whose role is to co-ordinate the activities of the class and liaise with students from the time of their application through to the end of the course. If learners have any queries, they contact their subject teacher in the first instance. If they are unable to help, they will refer the learner to the course administrator who will assist and support learners at all times [see below for details of supports for learners with additional educational needs].

7.3 Student Council

The Student Council is elected by the current student body each October. Its role is to act as a Forum for discussing issues of relevance to learners. Learners will be given the IDS email addresses of the Council members so they can contact them regarding any matters of interest. The Council meets with the FET Quality Assurance Manager each term, which is an opportunity for students to bring any relevant matters to the attention of the IDS Further Education and Training Department.

7.4 Learner Representatives on the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC)

Two student representatives (one Deaf student, one hearing) are also elected each October from the Student Council members to the QAC, which is part of the IDS governance structure, aiming to constantly improve the quality of service offered to learners. All enrolled learners will be given the IDS email addresses of these representatives.

7.5 Learner Surveys

During each course, the Course Administrator will contact learners to complete an online questionnaire available in both ISL and English to check their level of satisfaction with the course and the services provided. The first survey is conducted between weeks 3 and 5 of the course, allowing IDS FET staff to review registration and course induction satisfaction, take action, and close the feedback loop. The second survey is administered at the end of the course, enabling IDS FET to assess overall learner satisfaction, and improve where required. Students are reminded that their co-operation in completing this survey will be of great assistance to the IDS in monitoring the quality of courses. Three months after the end of each course the IDS will send learners another brief Destination survey asking if they propose undertaking further study and/or if they are using the skills acquired on the course.

7.6 Deaf Village Ireland (DVI) Facilities

The IDS is located in Deaf Village Ireland, Ratoath Road, Cabra, Dublin 7. The DVI campus offers a wide range of facilities for those attending all IDS classes including:

- Free car parking - there is large car park on the grounds of DVI
- Cafe and Common area - DVI has a cafe serving food and beverages and an extensive seating area for relaxation
- Sports Facilities: students can become members and avail of the DVI swimming pool, gym, sports hall, playing fields and join various clubs.
- Public Transport – DVI is served by commuter bus to Navan and Cavan, Dublin Bus number 38, 39, 39A, 70 and commuter train service from Sligo/Maynooth also a Luas tram interconnections services from the main Irish Rail stations.

7.7 Learner Handbook

This offers academic support and guide to services, and available on LMS.

7.8 Career and Employment Supports

Recognising that in the Post-Pandemic Ireland accessing employment opportunities may be more challenging than before for Deaf adults, IDS has appointed a Guidance and Work Placement Officer in the Advocacy Department to advocate for Deaf adults with employers and support and advise Deaf adults in preparing for the workplace. IDS learners are advised to contact their Course Administrator for further information.

7.9 IDS Advocacy Department

IDS has a strong and very experienced Advocacy Department distinct from the FET Education section. Its services are available to IDS Deaf learners to assist them in accessing a whole range of services, including counselling where necessary, thus making it a very valuable support for IDS learners.

7.10 Supports for International Learners

IDS FET courses are either taught through ISL or are courses for learning Irish Sign Language. Where an international learner living in Ireland, has no knowledge of ISL they will be directed to the QQI ISL Level 3 course which requires no prior knowledge of ISL for entry. Support in basic English for such a learner, on a one-to-one basis, is provided, where required, for the learner to understand the basic signs in English. The relevant sections of the QQI *Code of Practice for Provision of Education and Training to International Learners* (July 2015} are complied with where applicable to IDS. This requires fostering integration of international learners and building a sense of community. It also requires access to feedback mechanisms for international learners which enable IDS identify issues and respond to issues identified.

7.11 Learners with Additional Needs

Deaf people have through the years become one of the most marginalised groups in Irish society, preventing their full participation as equal citizens. Stark statistics from the CIB, ESRI, the Oireachtas and IDS's own research indicates the following in 2019.

- Over 70% of Deaf school leavers have "little or no confidence" in attempts to read a newspaper
- Over 80% of Deaf school leavers have" little or no confidence" in attempting to write a basic letter, use email or in filling out an official form
- 40% -50% of people who are deaf from early childhood experience mental health difficulties compared to 25% for the hearing community
- Two-thirds of the Deaf community have difficulty accessing public information on their rights (CIB)
- The odds of leaving a job are higher among those from the Deaf /Hard of Hearing community (ESRI) {see IDS Submission to SOLAS 2018]

IDS FET Education is the only Deaf education provider which provides second chance education in the Deaf community's first/preferred language, which is ISL. Bearing in mind the educational disadvantage outlined above, IDS courses support learners in gaining skills which

- Are relevant to personal and social development
- Provide an opportunity to practice interactive skills
- Improve self-confidence, assertiveness, and empathy
- Prepare learners for employment and promotion in the workplace

Furthermore, to overcome disadvantage the IDS has put the following supports in place:

1. Where individual learner needs are identified on the application form or at interview, the Learner Support Plan Form is completed to get details of the learner's needs, with the aim of putting supports in place (see Learner Support Plan Form, Appendix 2) Examples of diversity that IDS can facilitate includes learners with arthritis in their fingers who are learning ISL, Deafblind, wheelchair users, ESOL learners.
2. Study skills and literacy support are provided on a one-to-one or small group basis as required
3. Learners are informed of the full range of services available at induction and through the learner handbook which is distributed at Induction
4. Tutorial with individual learners to identify emerging needs and provide pastoral care

Online Learning Supports

Responding to the desire of learners to avail of the opportunities provided by online learning, IDS appointed a Digital Education Officer in May 2021 to enhance supports for learners and develop our Learning Management System (LMS which has been in operation since September 2021 and learning materials and resources are in place for Blended and Fully Online, synchronous and asynchronous provision.

IDS FET will continue to gather direct and indirect evidence and feedback on how our blended and fully online education system provides educational opportunities for our learners.

Online Library

An online library of ISL resources provides a valuable additional support for self-study. Further information is given in the ISL course details in the pack circulated to learners at induction.

Supports for progression

In recent years IDS also provided tailored supports to facilitate the FET progression of Deaf learners. IDS assisted Cabra Community College (CDETB) to provide a Healthcare Assistant course for Deaf learners in Cabra Community College. IDS provides the interpreters and other supports while Cabra College provides the specialist teachers and facilities. All of the first cohort of learners who undertook this course were successful in gaining employment.

Supports for Hearing Learner

IDS also provides supports to hearing learners undertaking ISL courses. Applicants are requested to identify any additional supports required at the interview stage, so that supports can be put in place for commencement of course, while needs identified during the course are followed up without delay. Access to the online library of ISL resources provides valuable supports for these learners also.

Responsibility

The FET Course Manager, the Deaf Course Administrator and the ISL Course Administrator have responsibility for co-ordinating learner supports

Monitoring

The QA Manager monitors learner feedback from learner surveys, the Student Council, the learner representatives on the QAC, and learner feedback reported by teaching staff to ensure learner needs are met.

8. Information and Data Management

8.1 Information Systems:

Policy

The IDS is committed to maintaining reliable information and data required for informed decision making on what is working well and what needs improvement. The IDS complies with current data protection legislation such as the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)

IDS will ensure data is collected, stored, processed, and retained in a matter that is ethnical. Data is required for the SOLAS Programme and Learners Support Systems (PLSS) database, QBS certification platform. Other relevant data is communicated to staff and management for self-monitoring and planning purposes.

Purpose

The aim of this policy is to ensure that key information for performance indicators is gathered in IDS and utilized to inform decision making.

8.2 Learner Information Systems

The IDS collects, analyses, and uses relevant learner information for the effective management of its programmes, and as required for the PLSS and QBS. This ensures IDS knows what is working well and what requires attention. The following data provides key information for performance indicators.

- Application and enrolment numbers per programme. The FET ISL Course Administrator and the FET Deaf Course Administrator collate the information on enquires and applications and report on the percentage of those that translate into enrolments, and enrolment trends.
- Profile of learner population including age distribution, gender, previous status. This data is generated from application forms.
- Completion rate and early leaver/dropout report on programmes Attendance registers are monitored and indicate early leavers, data which is recorded on the PLSS system. Significant dropout rate on a course would indicate the need for urgent remedial action
- Completion/certification rates. Following the Results Approval panel Meeting the learner assessment results which have been entered into the QBS system are forwarded to QQI requesting certification. The QBS system generate a range of reports on learner achievement which is a vital performance indicator.
- Learner satisfaction analysis. The data from learner surveys on each course is analysed to indicate the level of learner satisfaction with their course and related services Areas needing improvement are identified and addressed

- Learner additional support information. This data indicates how resources to address the additional needs of learners has been utilized.
- Destination of learners – employment and progression rates are derived from the survey following each course and stored in the PLSS

8.3 Management Information System

The use of SharePoint in Microsoft 365, a secure place to store, organise, share and access information. along with PLSS and QBS ensures the IDS Learner Information System is comprehensive. SharePoint is robust and capable of doing the following:

- maintaining learner attendance records for current and future use
- providing reports required for internal quality management and improvement including EA and evaluation reports, action plans, reports for the QAC, staff monthly reports for the Board, and the minutes of QA meetings, bi-weekly FET Management and Administration Team meetings, QAC meetings, Course review meetings, Teaching Staff Forum minutes.
- generating data required for and compatible with external regulatory systems
- generating statistical and other reports to meet the requirements of QQI, SOLAS and other agencies
- ensuring that data relating to learner assessment is accurate, complete, and maintained securely. The Course manager controls access to learner assessment data on SharePoint

The IDS Management Information System enables necessary information to be stored and accessed where it is needed, when it is needed. It facilitates on-going analysis in light of key performance indicators and objectives. [see Information Technology, Internet and Email Usage, Appendix 5]

8.4 Information for Further Planning

Analysis of the information in the system gives insights for future planning and for dealing with issues highlighted.

- Analysis of enrolment trends indicates where each programme stands in the cycle of expansion, peak, and decline.
- Analysis of learner feedback surveys indicates areas for improvement
- Review of teaching staff feedback also highlights where change is needed

8.5 Completion Rates

- Information on completion rates is collected each year. The pattern over a period of years is analysed and made available for external quality reviews which take place at least every 5 years.

8.6 Record Maintenance and Retention

Records management relates to the controls in place of information and data. it relates to the creation, maintenance and disposal of records.

Purpose
The purpose of this policy is to provide details of records management procedures and outline the duration of time records are retained by the IDS. it also addresses the safe and secure disposal of records which are no longer required by the IDS to function.

Scope
The scope of this policy extends to all formats of records: paper based and electronic. The record retention schedule prescribes the minimum period that IDS records must be retained. However, the IDS, may at its discretion keep records for longer if deemed necessary or if the information is required to respond to queries.

Exclusions
This policy excludes the retention and disposal of records held on PLSS and QBS. these records are subject to SOLAS and QQI Record Retention Policies. These records include:

Records of Learner Achievement (Learner Results) held indefinitely and available to students if required.

Personal Information (Name/Address/Registration Number) held on PLSS and QBS.

The IDS is committed to the maintenance and retention of records as follows:

- records of learner application and enrolment are retained for 2 years
- registers of Learner attendance are available from when IDS FET courses started and are maintained for five years
- Learner work for assessment is retained until after the period for appeals for each course has expired

Disposal of Records
All records maintained by the IDS are electronic format. The retention period will be reviewed every three years and disposal of records will take place annually.
Details of the records deleted should be documented and retained for auditing purposes. A Data Destruction Certificate should be updated and signed by the FET Course Manager following each cycle.

Responsibility
The FET Course manager will have responsibility for the implementation of records management and retention policy.

8.7 Data Protection and Freedom of Information

The IDS fully respects the individual's right to privacy. Any personal information provided to IDS is treated with the highest standards of security and confidentiality and in accordance with the Data Protection Acts 1988 – 2018, including the General Data Protection Act (GDPR) which came into force across the EU on 25th May 2018. The IDS as a Data Controller fully adheres to its legal responsibilities to:

- Obtain and process personal data lawfully, fairly and in a transparent manner
- Keep personal data safe and secure
- Keep it only for specified lawful purposes
- Process it only in ways compatible with the purpose for which it was given initially
- Keep data accurate and relevant
- Retain it no longer than is necessary for the specified purposes
- Provide a copy of personal data, on request

The contact for IDS Data Protection queries is dataprotection@irishdeafsociety.ie

[See IDS Data Protection Statement Appendix 5]

All Learners are required to read and sign the following data protection statement before registration.

DATA PROTECTION POLICY

We are committed to protecting your personal data and right to privacy in compliance with Data Protection legislation and *General Data Protection Regulation* (GDPR). We collect, share and transfer learner's personal data to other data controllers where required or permitted by law. The information that you provide to the Irish Deaf Society will be used for its stated purpose.

9. Public Information and Communication

9.1 Public Information

Policy

The IDS is committed to ensuring that the information it publishes is clear, accurate, objective, up to date and easily accessible as required by the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012. Public information in this context refers to the information that the IDS publishes and communicates about its education and training programmes, its research publications, its Quality Assurance policies, and procedures, and about evaluations and findings from Quality Assurance evaluations. All material prepared for publication is checked for accuracy by IDS FET Course Manager and QA Manager prior to publication, who confirms that checking in a report to the QAC. For accessibility, information is published in ISL as well as the English language.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure the IDS fulfils its legal requirements to provide accurate and honest information which is monitored and updated on an ongoing basis.

Procedure

The IDS website is the principal source of public information. Core governance documents for quality assurance in the corporate domain – the IDS Constitution 2021 and the IDS Governance Code for the Charities Regulator are published, along with the Annual Report, the AGM Report and Audited Accounts. The IDS Complaints and Feedback procedure are accessible on the website, in addition to information for learners as detailed below.

The IDS recognises that communication is a two-way process, so it uses a range of communication channels to interact with its target audience to promote the interests, education and training of the Deaf community and the hearing community who can support Deaf people.

The target audience for the IDS external communications includes:

- The Deaf community, their families, and friends
- IDS learners and potential learners
- Those who support the Deaf community
- SOLAS, POBAL and other funding agencies
- Policy makers
- Organisations providing information to the public
- Media, journalists, and researchers

The range of communication channels used by the IDS to maximise the effectiveness of our communications includes:

- The IDS website which is the principal source of public information
- Emails
- Telephone calls, using ISL interpreters where necessary
- Meetings, using ISL interpreters where necessary
- Visitors to the Deaf Village
- The media
- Social media including, but not limited to, Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn
- The IDS AGM which is livestreamed on an appropriate social medium

9.2 Learner Information

The IDS website contains all relevant programme and award information for prospective and current learners. For each programme there is a Course Descriptor, Course Content, Entry requirements. In addition, details on certification includes the following information:

- Whether or not a programme leads to an award
- The name of the awarding body
- The title of the award: whether the award is recognised in the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ), and if so the award type and NFQ level
- Procedures for access, transfer, and progression
- Details of the Protection of Enrolled Learners (PEL). Courses for Deaf adults are SOLAS funded and free of charge to the learner. In relation to ISL classes for hearing adults, SOLAS funds teacher costs, while overheads are covered by a small charge to learners.

All email enquiries for course information are dealt with promptly by the FET Deaf Course Administrator and the ISL Course Administrator, while telephone and walk-in enquiries are routed to the relevant staff member for follow-up. Applications are made through the website. All IDS communications comply with GDPR requirements.

9.3 Publication of Quality Assurance Evaluation Reports

Following IDS owned quality evaluations, the written report, and where appropriate, a quality improvement plan, will be published on the IDS website in an easily accessible format and location as soon as possible following the evaluation event.

Responsibility

The ISL Course Administrator is responsible for liaising with the website administrator to ensure programme information is accurate and updated. The CEO liaises with the website administrator to upload updated governance documents.

Monitoring

The FET QA Manager monitors IDS public information and communication to check that it is clear, accurate and up-dated.

10. Other Parties Involved in Education and Training

10.1 Peer Relationships with the Broader Education Community:

Peer Relationship Policy

The IDS recognises that awards made on the NFQ are intended to promote recognition and confidence in the learning outcomes attained by learners. Where the IDS FET proposes to enter into partnerships or arrangements to provide other Awards outside the NFQ, or act as a second provider, these arrangements will be assessed through reputable bodies and subject to IDS QA procedures, approval by the IDS Quality Assurance Committee and external quality assurance procedures. Any such initiatives or partnerships would be published on the IDS website.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that any awards, accreditations, collaborations, arrangements, or partnerships in Ireland or abroad offered by or through the IDS are organised with reputable bodies and are subject to appropriate internal and external quality assurance procedures and that any such arrangements are published on the IDS website.

10.2 External Partnerships and Second Providers

The IDS do not sub-contract provision of education services to other providers or working as a second provider. When IDS ISL courses are organised outside our Dublin headquarters, the IDS maintains direct control of the courses and procedures are in place to quality assure the courses as detailed in Section 5.4

The IDS works closely with the Centre for Deaf Studies in TCD in a mutually beneficial collaboration. It gives IDS access to the latest research findings and developments in the field of Deaf education.

The IDS is affiliated to the National Council for the Deaf Ireland. Established in 1995, the National Council is an umbrella group of local and national organisations. The council determines on the primary concerns and priorities affecting the Deaf community, leading to policies and approaches to lobby for equality and rights of Deaf people. Through this Council the IDS has established policies for empowerment and independence among Deaf people (see the IDS website WWW.IRISHDEAFSOCIETY.IE)

Similarly, IDS membership of the European Union of the Deaf and the World Federation of the Deaf gives an international perspective which feeds into best practice in Deaf education in IDS.

Collaboration with Cabra College (CDETB)

The IDS collaborated with Cabra Community College (CDETB) in the recent past in the provision of a Health Care Assistant course for Deaf learners. It is clear that Cabra College was responsible for the quality assurance and entry of learners for QQI certification for the course, while the IDS provided essential supports for the learners.

10.3 Expert Panellists, Examiners and Authenticators

The IDS follows QQI guidelines on the appointment of External Authenticators (EA's), while all proposed EAs are approved by the IDS Quality Assurance Committee prior to appointment.

In selecting an appropriate external authenticator care is taken by IDS FET to ensure that the authenticator:

- Has technical/subject matter expertise within the appropriate award area/field of learning
- Has experience of delivering programme assessment or work in the industry/field
- Agrees to undertake appropriate training and to attend appropriate briefings
- Has the qualities necessary to interact with learners, assessors, and senior staff members, as appropriate
- Has administrative and I.T. skills
- Can undertake to operate within the code of practice and guidelines issued by QQI, as appropriate
- Is available to IDS FET at appropriate times
- Is independent of the IDS
- Informs the IDS of any potential conflict of interest that may compromise their role

The appointment of External Evaluators and other expert panel members is subject to the approval of the QAC. Ethical guidelines provided to such evaluators and panel members require a declaration of any interests that could cause conflict with the role or responsibilities proposed by the IDS. Independence and expertise are reviewed each time a person is engaged because these are subject to change over time.

The person appointed as External Evaluator will be:

- independent of IDS
- capable of comparing the quality of the programme(s) under review with that of similar programmes elsewhere
- be able to bring support, recognition and positive suggestions for improvement
- have education, training or industry experience in the broad subject area of the programme being evaluated
- where a suitable person is available, the IDS will use a "peer review", i.e., a person from another provider in further or higher education capable of giving an informed view on the success of the programme and able to contribute to its improvement (QQI *Quality Assurance Guidelines and Criteria for Provider Access to Initial Validation of Programmes leading to QQI Awards, Further Education and Training, 2013).*

Responsibility

The IDS Course Manager is responsible for proposing the appointment of EAs and EVs to the QAC, which approves the appointments. The QA Manager has responsibility for ensuring that any arrangements to provide Awards outside the NFQ would be organised with reputable bodies and would be subject to IDS QA procedures and published on the IDS website.

Monitoring

The Quality Assurance Manager monitors compliance with QA policies and procedures for other parties involved in IDS FET, and reports to the QAC.

11 Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review

11.1 Provider-owned Internal Review, Self-evaluation, and Monitoring

Policy

The IDS is committed to maintaining rigorous processes for monitoring, review and self-evaluation of its programmes and related services as part of IDS FET's overall quality assurance framework. Internal self-monitoring in IDS is ongoing and focuses on specific indicators, while self-evaluation has a broad focus and is carried out at least every 5 years for all programmes, related services and the impact of quality assurance policies and procedures. Self-evaluation, through constructive questioning, leads to positive recommendations and improvement planning for current and future students and IDS staff.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to set out the framework Self-Evaluation, monitoring, and review in IDS FET in alignment with QQI's Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines.

Scope

This policy applies directly or indirectly to all members of the IDS FET community, including learners, teaching, management, and administration staff.

11.2 Internal Self-monitoring

Procedure

A range of quality measures have been identified which can be checked in monitoring:

(1) A Learner Survey is completed at the end of each course. The feedback from this is very important for indicating the level of learner satisfaction with a programme and indicating potential issues that need to be addressed. The QA Manager raises the identified issue at the bi-weekly FET Management and Administration Team meeting and the end of year programme review meeting to ensure an action plan to address the issue is drawn up and implemented.

(2) FET team meetings are held on a bi- weekly basis and among other matters provide an opportunity to deal with learner issues. The FE Course Manager chairs the meetings. They act as an on-going monitoring of programmes and address matters ranging from resource needs to assessment. Informal learner feedback is given to course teachers on an on-going basis. Teaching staff report any issues of concern to the Management team who raise them at the bi-weekly meeting. Any actions agreed at the meeting are noted in the minutes and checked for implementation

The meetings provide the data and impetus for programme improvement. Issues that arise from these meetings are reported to the QAC where necessary. They form the basis of future planning and contribute to the annual review of each course. Issues that arose during the year form agenda items at the end of year review to clarify that corrective action has been taken.

(3) Annual Programme Review

Each QQI programme carries out an annual review which is attended by the Quality Assurance Manager and relevant FET team members. Learner survey results, completion rates, learner assessment results from the Results Approval Panel, and issues that have arisen at the regular team meeting during the year are reviewed. Progress is monitored against objectives. Any issues arising from the External Authenticator Reports (see below) are also included on the agenda (see Annual Programme Review Agenda, Appendix 10) The agenda for the meeting includes:

- Learner expectation, needs and satisfaction in relation to the programme
- Learner workload, completion rates and progression
- How the changing needs of society and the economy are impacting on the programme
- The learning environment and learner support issues
- The impact of the latest research on programme content

Data on completion rates is compiled by the FET Programme Manager. This is compared to data for previous years and objectives for the programme. This informs decision making for the programme. A report from each programme review is submitted to the QAC, with a quality improvement plan which sets out a schedule of actions to be undertaken. The plan identifies the staff member(s) responsible for actions and follow-up. Where the QAC approves changes, it monitors their implementation over the following academic year.

(4) Destination Survey

A **Destination Survey** is carried out three months after the completion of a course to check whether those who have completed a course with IDS have progressed to employment or further study, or in the case of ISL courses whether the graduate is now using ISL and for what purposes. This clarifies the benefits gained from attending an IDS course.

(5) External Authenticator Report

An **External Authenticator (EA)** who has the required qualifications, experience and knowledge is appointed by IDS in accordance with QQI policy. The report generated by the EA feeds into both the annual programme review and the programme self-evaluation described in the next section of this document. Feedback in the EA reports are presented to both the programme review meeting and Results Approval Panel Meeting and contributes to developing an improvement plan for the following year.

(6) The Student Council

The **Student Council** meets with the QA Manager on a regular basis to ensure effective communication between students, staff, and management. Suggestions for improvement in programmes may come through this channel.

(7) Learner representatives on the QAC

The 2 **learner representatives** on the QAC, one Deaf and one hearing, may raise issues regarding programmes which are of concern to the student body. The QA Manager, who is a member of the QAC then follows up on these concerns and reports back to the QAC on remedial actions implemented.

11.3 Self-evaluation, Improvement, and Enhancement

Evaluation is a structured process to examine, reflect and report on the effectiveness of an activity. It seeks to identify good practice and areas for improvement and to use the findings to inform future policy and practice. In the IDS the evaluation will focus on the quality of the programmes and the effectiveness of the QA system, emphasising the impact of IDS FET provision on learners and other stakeholders, rather than on policies and procedures.

IDS evaluations seek to

- Engage stakeholders
- Gather reliable evidence from a range of sources
- Draw conclusions
- Make recommendations for improvement
- Ensure recommendations are implemented

A self-evaluation has 2 outputs, a self-evaluation report, with findings and recommendations for improvement, and an improvement plan detailing how these will be implemented.

The criteria used to measure success are set out on an evaluation checklist with a list of questions for each of the following areas of programmes and related services based on IDS and FESS templates:

- Public Information and Communication
- Programme Development, Delivery and Review
- Equality of Access, Transfer and Progression
- Staff Recruitment Management and Development
- Teaching and Learning
- Assessment of Learners
- Supports for Learners
- Information and Data Management

The questions on the Checklist are asked of learners and staff and based on the strength of the evidence the answer to each question is marked as follows:

3 = Strength (evidence of good practice)

2 = Acceptable (evidence that this area meets expectation)

1 = Improvement needed (no evidence of acceptable standard)

Programmes and related services will be externally reviewed at least every 5 years. The Quality Assurance Manager has responsibility to ensure that the Self-Evaluation is undertaken. The IDS Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) or QQI can make a recommendation to initiate the review of a programme at any point if it is deemed appropriate. All evaluation findings will be submitted to the QAC. The IDS is committed to adhering to QQI Guidelines in the selection of External Evaluators to ensure their independence.

Methodology

IDS policy is that the evaluation work is carried out firstly by an internal team, the work is verified by an external evaluator and an agreed report is issued. While programmes are normally evaluated on an individual basis, a group of programmes, for example ISL Levels 3 and 4, may be evaluated together to maximise the use of resources. The FET Course Manager is responsible for the co-ordination of evaluation while all relevant staff members on the course participate in the evaluation of a programme.

Data for the external evaluation is collected as follows:

(1) Information from the annual programme review over the previous 3-5 years on enrolments, attendance, retention, and certification will provide much data.

(2) It is IDS policy to give all learners the opportunity to contribute to the external evaluation. Accordingly, in addition to the feedback collected throughout the duration of each course, 2 other approaches to gathering student feedback are undertaken during the evaluation.

 (a) a focus group is assembled from the current class undertaking the programme that is under review.

 (b) all current learners and recent graduate learners of the programme are invited to complete a survey to contribute to the evaluation.

(3) Teaching staff on the programme complete the Self-Evaluation Checklist at a staff meeting convened for the purpose.

(4) Other stakeholders such as employers are invited to complete a questionnaire. The information gathered is collated and analysed and a draft report compiled. It

provides quantitative and qualitative judgements on each programme and related services under the headings:

- Programme Design and Content
- Programme Delivery
- Assessment of Learners
- Related Services and Resources
- Attainment of Programme objectives

The Course Manager co-ordinating the evaluation undertakes this work in conjunction with the course team.

The external evaluator becomes involved at this stage and through a process of sampling will verify the finding of the draft report and make recommendations, where appropriate, based on their own experience

A final Self-Evaluation Report and a Programme Improvement Plan are agreed by the external evaluator and IDS staff and forwarded to the CEO. A copy is also sent to the Quality Assurance Manager for dissemination to the programme team through the programme team meetings and for the attention of the QAC. The Programme Improvement Plan (PIP) incorporates a time frame for the implementation of any actions required. The actions taken are monitored by the QA Manager and progress reported to the QAC.

Where the Evaluation Report requires corrective action, in some instances the issues involving staff, premises or resources may be dealt with by the CEO. In other instances, the CEO will refer the issue to the IDS Board.

When the Self-Evaluation Report has been reviewed by the QAC and the IDS Board it will be forwarded to QQI and published on the IDS website.

Selection of External Evaluator

The person appointed as External Evaluator will be:

- independent of IDS
- capable of comparing the quality of the programme(s) under review with that of similar programmes elsewhere
- be able to bring support, recognition, and positive suggestions for improvement
- have education, training, or industry experience in the broad subject area of the programme being evaluated
- where a suitable person is available, the IDS will use a “peer review”, i.e., a person from another provider in further or higher education capable of giving an informed view on the success of the programme and able to contribute to its improvement (QQI *Quality Assurance Guidelines and Criteria for Provider Access to Initial Validation of Programmes leading to QQI Awards, Further Education and Training, 2013).*

Responsibility for Self-Evaluation

The Course Manager has responsibility for (1) overseeing the Self-Evaluation process (2) for sourcing the External Evaluator who is approved by the QAC (3) liaising with the External Evaluator (4) co-ordinating the writing of the Self-Evaluation Report and the Programme Improvement Plan.

Monitoring

The QA Manager is responsible for ensuring that the range of ongoing monitoring tools are functioning effectively, that the annual programme review of each programme takes place, and that the Self-Evaluation of every programme and related services takes place at least once every 5 years.

11.4 Provider-owned quality assurance engages with external quality assurance

The IDS quality assurance system is connected with the IDS's external QA obligations to QQI, including statutory external review of IDS QA under the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012.

External quality assurance shares the same objective as provider-owned quality assurance - to maintain a desired level of quality in education, training, and related services. The IDS FET aims to comply with QQI's requirement to achieve that quality objective by

Following QQI guidelines which set out national expectations, and guidelines for developing policies and procedures to inform provider-owned quality assurance

Seeking QQI continued approval of IDS QA procedures

Publishing IDS quality review reports as required by QQI.

Appendices

Appendix 1. Quality Assuring Assessment of Learners

Quality Assuring Assessment of Learners:

Assessments
Internal Verification
External Authentication
Results Approval Panel
Learner Appeals Process
Requesting Certification

Irish Deaf Society Internal Verification Procedures

QQI defines internal verification (IV) as the "*process by which the provider's assessment policies and procedures… are monitored by the provider itself*". (**QQI Quality Assuring Assessment, Guidelines for Providers, Revised 2013**)

The IV process involves:

- Verifying that IDS FET assessment procedures have been applied across the range of assessment activities
- Confirming assessment results by checking learner evidence exists and marks and grades are recorded correctly

Irish Deaf Society will ensure that the following steps are followed:

(1) Verification that assessment procedures as agreed in Irish Deaf Society's QA agreement with QQI have been followed for each learner group/component (module) group entered for certification. This includes that the following are available: copy of component specification/s, validated programme module/s, completed provisional results sheet(s)/report(s), assessment brief/s, examination paper/s, marking scheme/s, outline solution/s, assessment plan/s and examination timetable.
(2) For **ALL** learner portfolios – verification that there is a portfolio of evidence for each learner and that result/s are recorded.

(3) For the sample of learner portfolios, verification that:

   a. Assessment procedures as agreed in Irish Deaf Society QA agreement with QQI have been followed for each learner group/component (module) group entered for certification. This includes checking that the evidence in each portfolio matches the techniques in the component specification / validated programme, work is submitted by the learner indicating that it is their own work, deadline dates for submission of evidence issued to learners.
   b. Marks and grades are recorded correctly and are transferred from learner evidence to marking sheets/provisional results sheets
   c. Percentage marks and grades allocated are consistent with QQI grading bands
   d.

(4) For the sample chosen, the internal verifier will indicate that those portfolios have been internally verified e.g., the internal verifier will circle the mark on the provisional
(5) results sheet and initial each of the portfolios that have been internally verified
(6) Relevant staff will complete checklists and reports

The attached documents will assist with the process:

(1) Teacher/Assessor Checklist – Preparing for the Authentication Process
(2) Internal Verification Checklist
(3) Internal Verification Report
(4) **Sampling Strategy for the Authentication Process**

Irish Deaf Society Internal Verification (IV) Checklist

Internal Verifier: Learner Group Name: Component Name and Code:

Number of Learners: Sample Size (Irish Deaf Society sampling strategy attached):

Check the following are available, if applicable (tick as appropriate)

Provisional Results Sheet/Report	Component Specification	Assessment Briefs	Examination Papers	Outline Solutions	Marking Schemes	Assessment Plan	Examination Timetable
Yes ☐ No ☐	Yes ☐ No ☐	Yes ☐ No ☐	Yes ☐ No ☐ n/a ☐	Yes ☐ No ☐ n/a ☐	Yes ☐ No ☐	Yes ☐ No ☐	Yes ☐ No ☐

Items to be checked for ALL learners	**Yes**	**No**	**Comments**	
Does the number of portfolios available match the provisional results sheet/report?				
Is there a mark assigned to every learner listed on the provisional results sheet/report? (Where an exemption applies, is the QQI-assigned code entered?)				
Items to be checked for the selected sample of learner evidence	**Yes**	**No**	**N/A**	**Comments**
Does the evidence in each portfolio match the techniques in the component specification / validated programme?				
Are learner marking sheet/s attached to each portfolio?				
Are marks totalled / percentage marks calculated /grades allocated correctly?				
Are the marks transferred correctly from learner marking sheets to the provisional results sheet/report?				
Where exemptions (credits for other certification) apply is the correct documentation in the portfolio to verify this?				
Is there a signed statement/s in the portfolio indicating that the work is the learner's own?				
Is there evidence that deadline dates for the submission of assessment evidence were issued to learners?				
Is there evidence that feedback was given to learners?				

IDS Internal Verifier: ______________________ Date: __/__________/______________

Irish Deaf Society FET Teacher/Assessor Checklist - Preparing for the Authentication Process (IV & EA)

Name of Teacher/Assessor: Component Name and Code:
Learner Group Name: Number of Learners entered for Assessment:

Please ensure the following are in place for the authentication process:	**Please tick when complete, or mark n/a if not applicable**
Copy of component specification	☐
Copy of validated programme module	☐
Assessment plan available*, including examination timetable, if appropriate*	☐
Assessment briefs, including d*eadline dates indicated on assessment brief*	☐
Examination papers	☐
Marking schemes	☐
Outline solutions	☐
Correct number of assessment portfolios / videos	☐
All assessment portfolios in alphabetical order	☐
Correct assessment techniques applied	☐
Provisional Results are entered into the QQI Business System (QBS)	☐
All evidence marked, marks totalled correctly, percentage marks calculated, and grades awarded correctly	☐

Completed learner marking sheet/s attached to each portfolio	☐
Completed provisional results sheet/report	☐
Marks transferred correctly to provisional results sheet/report	☐
Integrated assessment evidence is clearly identified	☐
Learner authorship statement signed	☐
Learner feedback recorded on assessment brief	☐
Results are amended on the QBS after IV and prior to the EA visit, if required	☐

Teacher/Assessor Signature: Date:

Irish Deaf Society Internal Verification Report

Registered Provider:	Irish Deaf Society, Deaf Village Ireland, Ratoath Road, Cabra Dublin 7, D07 W94H
Registered Number:	PQ00633

Named award(s) and codes (Include major and minor awards) Named award(s) for which results are being internally verified (sampled)	

Date of internal verification:	**22/08/2022**

Names and signatures of staff member(s) who completed internal verification for above awards:	1. Name: 2. Name:	Signature: Signature:

Internal verification

Monitoring assessment results

Total number of learners for whom evidence were sampled:................ *Number of learners in the sample:..................................*

Please complete for each named award/group of learner results verified	*Is the documentation available and completed correctly? e.g. mark sheets, learner records*		*Is sufficient and reliable assessment evidence available for all learners presented?*		*Was the evidence generated in accordance with appropriate assessment techniques and instruments?*		*Have marks been correctly totalled and grades awarded in line with QQI requirements*		
Named award title	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Comments/action points (if 'No' please identify issues/make recommendations)

Assessment processes and procedures	**Verification** of adherence to Irish Deaf Society's assessment procedures. Commentary should be provided as appropriate.
Basis on which sample of learner evidence was selected (i.e. Identify learner groups and total learner population being sampled and sample size selected)	
Assessment procedures *I (we) confirm that the assessment procedures as agreed through this Irish Deaf Society's quality assurance have been applied across all assessment activities for this award.* *Tick as appropriate* **Yes** [ ] **No** [ ]	Comment as appropriate *(If 'No' – identify issues arising and corrective action taken)*

Course Manager of Internal Verification Process:

Name: ………………………………… Signature: ………………………………..……… Date: …………/……………/………………

Irish Deaf Society External Authentication Procedures

QQI defines external authentication as the process that aims *"to provide independent authoritative confirmation of fair and consistent assessment of learners, in accordance with national standards".* (QQI Quality Assuring Assessment, Guidelines for Providers, Revised 2013).

Selecting the External Authenticator

Irish Deaf Society will select appropriately trained and briefed external authenticator/s.

The external authenticator will moderate results for awards in fields/sub fields in which the authenticator has broad subject matter expertise. Given their professional status it is expected that all external authenticators will possess the expertise necessary to moderate results in general areas, for example, Communications. In selecting an appropriate external authenticator, Irish Deaf Society will take care to ensure that the authenticator:

- Has technical/subject matter expertise within the appropriate award area/field of learning
- Has experience of delivering programme assessment or work in the industry/field
- Agrees to undertake appropriate training and to attend appropriate briefings
- Has the qualities necessary to interact with learners, assessors, and senior staff members, as appropriate
- Has administrative and I.T. skills
- Can undertake to operate within the code of practice and guidelines issued by QQI, as appropriate
- Is available to Irish Deaf Society at appropriate times
- Is independent of the centre to which s/he is assigned
- Informs them of any potential conflict of interest that may compromise their role

Timeframe for External Authentication

External authentication is part of *Irish Deaf Society* quality assuring assessment process and will take place after the learners have been assessed and after the internal verification process. External authentication will take place before the results approval process is implemented. In planning for external authentication consideration will be given to the following:

- The other assessment related processes: internal verification, results approval, requesting certification and appeals
- *Irish Deaf Society FET* deadlines and key dates
- QQI certification deadlines and key dates

All major, special purpose and supplemental award areas will have an external authenticator assigned per annum and all minor awards will be authenticated ***at least once every two years***.

Location for External Authentication

In choosing a location for external authentication care will be taken to ensure that all required documentation and equipment is available. The external authenticator will also meet with staff and learners, as appropriate. Ultimately the location chosen will facilitate the external authenticator to:

- Confirm the fair and consistent assessment of learners
- Review the internal verification report/s
- Apply Irish Deaf Society's sampling strategy
- Moderate assessment results
- Visit the centre and meet with appropriate staff and learners
- Participate in the results approval process, if agreed
- Identify any issues/irregularities in relation to the assessment process
- Recommend results for approval
- Produce an external authentication report (see template attached)

Documentation to be available for the External Authentication Process

- Access to SharePoint folder and LMS accessible
- Relevant award specifications and validated programme modules
- All relevant assessment instruments and appropriate supporting documentation, for example, briefs, examination papers, marking schemes and outline solutions
- The assessment plan/s
- All learner assessment evidence
- All learner assessment results recorded on provisional results sheet/s
- List of assessors per programme module and/or class group

- Internal verification report/s
- *Irish Deaf Society's sampling* strategy
- Appropriate equipment to moderate assessment evidence produced in a multi-media format must also be provided, as appropriate.

Conducting External Authentication

The external authenticator will work through the following stages of the process:

1. Confirm arrangements with the Irish Deaf Society's Course Manager
2. Conduct the authentication process
3. Moderate the assessment results by reviewing the learner evidence yielded by *Irish Deaf Society's* sampling strategy
4. Report back to the Irish Deaf Society by completing Irish Deaf Society external authentication report – template attached

In order to moderate the assessment results, the external authenticator will:

- Review the award standards
- Review the QQI grading criteria
- Confirm assessment techniques and instruments are appropriate
- Ensure consistency with the award requirements
- Confirm the assessment criteria and marking sheets are appropriate
- Judge a sample of learner evidence and results to ensure consistency with the award standard and grading criteria

External Authenticator Checklist

Irish Deaf Society

Preparation for External Authentication	
Attend external authenticator briefing(s), as required	☐
Be familiar with relevant external authentication guidelines	☐
Be familiar with QQI Quality Assuring Assessment, Guidelines for Providers, Revised 2013	☐
Be familiar with QQI award structures, as appropriate	☐
Be familiar with QQI award standards: • Component specifications • QQI grading criteria • QQI grade bands • Grid of level indicators from National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ)	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
Be familiar with QQI assessment principles and techniques	☐
Be familiar with QQI's Recognition of Previously Certified Learning arrangements	☐
• Agree terms and conditions for the authentication process with provider • Dates/times/venues • Volume of work – award(s) (names, code and levels) and numbers of assessment portfolios to be authenticated by each authenticator • Paperwork to be completed and the time allocated to this • The date by which the external authentication report will be completed • Other responsibilities – for example, providing feedback to appropriate personnel and availability to the results approval panel • Remuneration (if appropriate)	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
Confirm, with the provider, the availability of: • Access to SharePoint or LMS assessments • Validated programmes • ALL relevant assessment instruments and appropriate supporting documentation (assessment briefs, examination papers, marking schemes, outline solutions and assessment plan(s)) • ALL learner assessment evidence	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

• ALL learner assessment results recorded on appropriate results sheet(s) • List of assessors per programme module and/or class group • Internal verification report(s) • The provider's sampling strategy • Appropriate equipment to moderate assessment evidence produced in a multi-media format, if required	☐

Conducting External Authentication	
Arrive at agreed location and meet with appropriate personnel	☐
Review the internal verification report	☐
Apply the provider's sampling strategy	☐
Ensure that the selected sample: • is sufficient in size • reflects the spread of grades including results that are borderline between the grades • includes evidence from each assessor and programme • reflects ALL centres	 ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
Read the assessment briefs, examination papers and associated documentation	☐
Ensure any special requirements related to the award are documented	☐
Determine the cut-off points by moderating results at the borderline marks: • Pass/Unsuccessful (Referred) • Distinction/Merit • Merit/Pass	 ☐ ☐ ☐
Transfer moderated marks to appropriate column on appropriate results sheet(s)	☐
Sign the marking sheet(s) in the portfolio	☐

Complete the moderation process for the remainder of the sample	☐
Sign the appropriate results sheet(s)	☐
Authenticate the findings/outcomes of the internal verification report(s)	☐
Identify any issues arising, concerns, examples of good practice and areas for improvement for inclusion in the external authentication report	☐
Document ALL changes made during moderation (to be attached to the external authentication report)	☐
Give constructive feedback to appropriate personnel	☐
Concluding External Authentication	
Complete external authentication report by agreed date	☐
Contact QQI if you have serious concerns regarding the integrity of the provider's assessment process	☐
Attend results approval panel meeting (if agreed)	☐

Signed: ___________________________________ Date: ______/________/__________

Irish Deaf Society External Authentication Report

Irish Deaf Society must ensure the process outline for external authentication is adhered to and verified in the report.

***Provider/Centre Name*:**	Irish Deaf Society
Registered Number:	**PQ0063**
Date/s of External Authentication Process:	

Indicate sample basis and sample size:	The basis on which the sample was selected should be identified here, i.e. the sample was taken for Named Award 'X' from learners or portfolios across 3 centres. Total number of learners or portfolios = 220, sample size (**√*n* + 1** selected across the spread of grades) = 16. Where the sample is taken from across more than one centre, the centres included in the sample should be listed in this report (see appendix 1 for Irish Deaf Society's sampling strategy).

Named award(s) and codes for sample selected (Major and component award(s) for which results are being externally authenticated)	

External Authenticator details	Name: Address/contact details:

Irish Deaf Society Report on Moderation of Assessment Results

Please complete for each named award/group of assessment results being authenticated	Have the results been internally verified by the college/centre?		Was the evidence assessed in accordance with techniques outlined in the Award Specification?		Are the results presented consistent with national standards for the award? (If no, identify results which have been changed.		Comments/Action Points (If 'No' identify issues/make recommendations).
Component award title	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Comments

Component Awards moderated	
Number of grades changed	
% of grades changed	

Describe examples of good practice observed/identify concerns:	
Outline areas for improvement	

Signatures:	External Authenticator:	Date:
	IDS Course Manager:	Date:

This report will be made available by Irish Deaf Society to the Results Approval Panel (RAP) and the QQI monitor.

Irish Deaf Society Results Approval Procedures

QQI states that "*procedures should be put in place to ensure that results are approved and signed off by the results approval panel*". (QQI Quality Assuring Assessment, Guidelines for Providers, revised 2013).

Irish Deaf Society Results Approval Process will:

- ensure that results are fully quality assured and signed off by the Irish Deaf Society prior to submission to QQI
- ensure appropriate decisions are taken regarding the outcome of the assessment and authentication processes
- ensure assessment decisions and results are reviewed, judged and processed in a fair, consistent and transparent manner

Establishing a Results Approval Panel

- **Membership**
  - Includes any of the following: Management, staff members, assessors, internal verifier/s and external authenticators, if appropriate
- **Terms of Reference**
  - Meets as required to review and approve assessment results
  - Reviews internal verification & external authentication report/s
  - ensure the results are fully quality assured & signed off by the Irish Deaf Society
  - Agrees to the submission of final results to QQI to request certification
  - Recommend that provisional / formal results be made available to learners
  - Identifies any issues arising in relation to the results and makes recommendations for corrective action
- **Frequency**
  - At least once during certification period
- Complete the Irish Deaf Society results approval panel meeting report (template attached)
- Following results approval, the Irish Deaf Society will request certification from QQI on behalf of learners. This will be done in line with QQI certification dates/deadlines available on www.qqi.ie

  Irish Deaf Society will print the submission summary from QBS for their records.

Irish Deaf Society Results Approval Panel Meeting Report

Date of Meeting: Chairperson: Interpreter:

Attendees:

Name	Role in Centre	Signature

Review of Reports	
Internal Verification Report/s Reviewed	☐
Issues arising/evidence of good practice	
External Authentication Report/s Reviewed	☐
Issues arising/evidence of good practice	

Corrective Action if recommended by the Results Approval Panel

Results Approval	
Final results approved	☐
Declaration of quality assured assessment results	☐

Signed by Chairperson: ____ Date: ___/____/__________

Irish Deaf Society Appeals Process

QQI states that *"a provider should put in place an appeals process. An appeals process will enable the learner to appeal*

- *The assessment process: if they perceive there to be any irregularities/inequality in its implementation*
- *The assessment result"*

<u>Only approved results can be formally appealed by the learner.</u> (Ref: QQI Quality Assuring Assessment, Guidelines for Providers, revised 2013).

Irish Deaf Society will ensure the following:

Information will be given to all learners on the appeals process, including procedures and deadlines for submitting an appeal – A minimum of 14 days (10 working days) will be allowed for learners to lodge an appeal.

- A learner must lodge their appeal in writing directly to the *Irish Deaf Society.* Learners will complete the Irish Deaf Society's learner appeals application for. A fee of ***€40 per module*** will apply per appeal and will be refunded to the learner if the outcome of the appeal is successful.

- Only evidence that has previously been presented by the learner and has been retained in *Irish Deaf Society* following the final assessment can be considered as part of an appeal. No new evidence can be submitted.

- All assessment evidence as required by the component specification / validated programme module must be available for the appeal. Any evidence not available will be assumed not to have been completed or submitted.

- Irish Deaf Society will process the appeal within a reasonable timeframe and will ensure that the appeal assessor is not the original assessor.
- *Irish Deaf Society will* inform the learner of the outcome of the appeal within a reasonable timeframe.
- Following completion of the appeals process, QQI will be informed by the Irish Deaf Society of appeal outcomes. QQI will make any required amendments to grades on the QQI Business System (QBS) & will re-issue a certificate for learners, as appropriate.

Irish Deaf Society

Sample - Sampling Strategy for Internal Verification and External Authentication

Assessment portfolios for ALL minor awards will be internally verified and externally authenticated.

The sampling strategy for the Irish Deaf Society will be applied by the internal verifier and the external authenticator. A minimum of 12 assessment portfolios will be included in the sample. If there are 12 or less assessment portfolios for a minor award, all portfolios will be internally verified and externally authenticated.

If there are more than 12 assessment portfolios, the sample will be selected using the following formula: $\sqrt{n} + 1$, where n is the total number of assessment portfolios in a specified range. See table below:

Number of portfolios (range)	**Minimum Sample size**
0 - 12	all
13 - 144	13
145-169	14
170-196	15
197-225	16
226-256	17
257-289	18
290-324	19
325-361	20
362-400	21
401-441	22
442-484	23

485-529	24

Where the same minor award is offered in a number of courses (and/or locations) in *Irish Deaf Society*, these portfolios may be combined for the purposes of sampling. If this is the case, the assessment portfolios will be clearly identified per course (and location) and per assessor so the internal verifier and the external authenticator can ensure the sample chosen includes assessment portfolios from each course (and location) and each *assessor*.

Assessment portfolios selected by the **external authenticator** must include the following in the sample, so as to allow the external authenticator to determine the cut-off points between the grades:

- The lowest Pass
- The highest Unsuccessful
- The lowest Distinction
- The highest Merit
- The lowest Merit
- The highest Pass

The remaining number of assessment portfolios will be randomly chosen, across all the grade bands, until the sample quota is reached.

Appendix 2. The IDS Learner Support Plan Form

Learner Support Plan

Courses provided by the Further Education and Training Department are primarily taught via ISL and assessments are either in written English or ISL, depending on the subject.

This form is to help you, and the Irish Deaf Society work together to ensure your learner needs are being met

All details recorded here are held in the strictest confidence and in keeping with GDPR (data protection) guidelines.

SECTION A: Learner Details

Name	
Surname:	
Email address:	
Mobile/WhatsApp number:	
Course Title:	
Course Code:	
Course starting date: (DD/MM/YYYY)	
Course end date:(DD/MM/YYYY)	
QQI Course: Yes/No	
Teacher staff name:	

SECTION B: Details of disability (ies)/special educational needs/ Language support

Do you have any of the following: (Tick one box or more)

Blindness or serious visual impairment	
Deafblind	
Intellectual disability	
Psychological or emotional condition	
Difficulty with communication	
Difficulty with learning, remembering or concentrating	
Difficulty with pain, breathing or any other chronic illness	
Difficulty with basic physical activities (walking Climbing etc)	
Arthritis	
International Sign needed (In the case of Deaf students wishing to learn ISL or English, living in Ireland but from other countries and have difficulty in conversing solely in ISL/ written English. These students are expected to have the sign language of their countries)	
Other (Please state)	

Section C: Supports offered

1. Do you need Learning Support during classes? If so, tick any of the boxes that apply

English Language support	
Personal Assistant (provided by learner)	
Classroom Assistant (for learners who do not have Pas)	
Visual Aids and/or adaptation of course material visually to meet needs	
Auditory Aids and/or adaptation of course material auditory to meet needs	
1-2-1 classes (strict criteria apply)	

Other (please state) 	

Criteria met: Yes/No (please circle)

2. Do you need learning support during assessments? If so, tick any of the boxes that apply

Written assessments for QQI to be delivered through ISL instead (ONLY applicable to QQI ISL courses)	
Extra time for timed examinations	
Other (Please state)	

- If there is anything we haven't covered, please indicate the learner support you would need for during classes or during assignments/examinations.

Agreement of Learner Support Plan

Signature of teaching staff:

____ Date: ________________ (DD/MM/YYYY)

Signature of learner:

____ Date: ________________ (DD/MM/YYY)

FET management:

Signature: ________________________________ Date: ________________(DD/MM/YYY)

Section D: Monitoring, Reviewing and Progress

Monitoring of the supports being offered will take place at regular intervals and a feedback session at the end.

1st Meeting: (DD/MM/YYYY)

Date	**Teaching Staff**	**Learner**
Relevant information / Summary of Progress	*This gives an overall summary by management, based on the learner and teaching staff feedback*	
Action Points	*What needs to be done, if any, agreed by all parties and if budget allows it?*	
Teacher	*Signed by teacher*	
Learner	*Signed by learner*	
FET management	*Approved by management*	

2nd Meeting: (DD/MM/YYYY)

Date	**Teaching Staff**	**Learner**
Relevant information / Summary of Progress	*This gives an overall summary by management, based on the learner and teaching staff feedback*	
Action Points	*What needs to be done, if any, agreed by all parties and if budget allows it?*	
Teacher	*Signed by teacher*	
Learner	*Signed by learner*	
FET management	*Approved by management*	

3rd Meeting: (DD/MM/YYYY)

Date	**Teaching Staff**	**Learner**
Relevant information / Summary of Progress	*This gives an overall summary by management, based on the learner and teaching staff feedback*	
Action Points	*What needs to be done, if any, agreed by all parties and if budget allows it?*	
Teacher	*Signed by teacher*	
Learner	*Signed by learners*	
FET management	*Approved by management (Alvean & Paul, or Brian if either absence)*	

Feedback

Date	**Teaching Staff**	**Learner**
Relevant information / Feedback	*This gives an overall summary by management, based on the learner and teaching staff feedback*	
Level of Satisfaction of Learner Support provision	*Are both Learner and teacher satisfied by Learner support provision? Explain.*	
Teacher	*Signed by teacher*	
Learner	*Signed by learner*	
FET management	*Approved by management*	

Appendix 3. Strategy Plan for Blended Learning and Fully Online Learning

Irish Deaf Society Further Education and Training

Strategy for Blended and Fully Online Learning 2025-2026

Vision

The Irish Deaf Society Further Education and Training Department (IDS FET) aims to provide the highest quality, highly accessible educational experiences to the Deaf community in Ireland as well as those seeking to learn Irish Sign Language.

Mission

IDS Further and Education Training (IDS FET) will invest in and leverage state-of-the-art technology to deliver its range of engaging high-quality student-centred programmes.

On the LMS, IDS FET will aim to develop an increasing range of online programmes for its community of learners.

IDS FET will regularly seek stakeholder feedback to inform where there are areas of success as well as opportunities for further development of the online educational experience.

Strategic Framework

This is a live, ongoing framework designed to support the initiation, development, provision, review, and maintenance of the IDS BLFOL programme.

FET management and the IDS Digital Education Officer (DEO) are responsible for developing the implementation framework, which is reviewed and approved by the CEO. The CEO holds overall responsibility for ensuring it aligns with the IDS Strategic Plan 2022–2026.

FET management, the DEO, and their team are also responsible for executing the plans and ensuring effective monitoring of their implementation.

1. Programme Design and Curriculum Development

Programme Design

Programmes will be designed to be engaging and effective with student-centred learning as a core principle. Online delivery will incorporate a variety of elements, of synchronous and asynchronous elements, including live interactive sessions, videos, quizzes, workbook activities, and discussion forums to support ongoing learning between active live lessons and enhance the overall learning experience.

All Programmes will be developed with Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles ensuring they are inclusive and accessible. Course materials on the LMS will be created with flexibility and multiple means of engagement to accommodate diverse learners needs. All content will be designed to comply with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) ensuring its usable and support learning outcomes.

Programme Delivery

Programmes content, activities, and assessments will be delivered using a variety of methods including synchronous interactive lessons and/or lectures, recorded videos, interactive quizzes, and differentiated materials to cater to for diverse learning preferences and needs and meet the intended outcomes.

With continuous access to course materials, learners also have opportunities to engage in asynchronous learning at their own pace. This blended aspect of learning follows the UDL principles by offering multiple means of engagement.

2. Assessment and Evaluation

IDS Further and Education Training (IDS FET) will ensure all online programme assessment will be possible to conduct and assess through the LMS and review assessment processes to ensure they comply with Academic Integrity and Misconduct Policy.

Online programmes will offer learners continual, formative assessment, as well as summative assessment for certification purposes.

The Assessment design includes the mapping of formative assessments or activities to specific Learning Outcomes and will continue to address the QQI Learning Outcomes agreed for the programme.

Formative feedback will be conducted in a variety of ways such as from the teacher during a lesson, or automated via the interactive activities such as quizzes in the programme content on the LMS.

Formative feedback will be timely and immediate where possible. Summative assessment and feedback given to learners will be timely i.e. within five working days of receipt of assignment submission. IDS FET will ensure this feedback will be available to learners on the LMS platform.

IDS FET will ensure learners have access to the summative assignment rubric on the LMS in advance of completing a relevant summative assignment.

IDS FET will ensure the LMS offers learners a progress tool whereby they may track their formative and summative progress at any given time.

IDS FET will regularly collect feedback from learners and teachers to continuously improve the online educational provision.

3. Technology Infrastructure

IDS Further and Education Training (IDS FET) will continue to invest in a robust LMS that supports course creation, delivery, and management.

IDS FET will ensure the LMS is user-friendly and accessible on multiple devices.

IDS FET will ensure the LMS offers the highest level of cyber security and meets the needs of GDPR compliance.

IDS FET will ensure the LMS offers fully integrated video conferencing and virtual classroom tools, as well as communication tools allowing contact between learners and teacher outside of scheduled lessons, collaboration opportunities, and assessment tools to facilitate a comprehensive learning experience.

4. Teacher Training and Support

IDS Further and Education Training (IDS FET) will provide teachers with initial technical training on using LMS, as well as continuous ongoing support and further regular CPD opportunities to maintain and develop teachers' ability to deliver online programmes effectively.

IDS FET will review training provision and opportunities on a yearly basis.

5. Learner Support

As a student-centred provider, IDS Further and Education Training (IDS FET) consider learner support to be wide in scope and will offer comprehensive support services to its learners.

IDS FET recognise learner support may be technical, physical, psychological and/or educational.

Upon registration, IDS FET will provide learners with technical information and advice to ensure they are well-informed and well-prepared to access the LMS.

Upon enrolment to a particular programme, learners will be provided with comprehensive and accessible technical support to ensure ease of LMS and virtual classroom navigation. Such support is UDL-principled so is available in multiple formats to suit an individual learner's specific needs. Learners will also be provided with contact details of relevant IDS FET staff in case of additional need.

Where relevant, additional learner support may be requested by learners via the IDS FET Learner Support Plan.

Learner performance and progress is monitored and tracked via the LMS. This tracking data enables early intervention if an individual learner is at risk of not passing their chosen course.

IDS FET have created a democratically elected Student Council which is the designated 'voice' of learners as a key stakeholder group.

6. Quality Assurance

IDS Further and Education Training (IDS FET) have established a designated role of Quality Assurance Manager, responsible for creating, maintaining and evaluating all quality assurance policies and procedures within FET.

IDS FET have established a Quality Assurance Committee, comprising internal and external members with diverse quality assurance experience and expertise. The committee meets four times per year.

IDS FET have established a designated role of Digital Education Officer, responsible for maintaining and developing the programmes and user experiences on the LMS.

IDS FET have established a Digital Education Committee, comprising internal members and external experts with varied digital education experience and expertise. The committee meets twice a year.

Programme quality assurance will be regularly reviewed and updated where appropriate. Reviews will be informed by best practice models, user feedback, programme content review, and reviews of teaching methods.

IDS FET believe strongly in harnessing data to inform where improvements to the learning experience can be made. The LMS is data-driven and collects a range of data that may be used, such as student tracking – attendance, engagement, performance etc. Such data can be extracted for data analytical purposes.

7. Marketing and Outreach

IDS Further and Education Training (IDS FET) will work closely with its D2L Brightspace Customer Success Manager to utilise any marketing or programme promotion opportunities.

In collaboration with its LMS marketing department, IDS FET have created a success story which will be released on the D2L Brightspace website.

IDS FET will promote its programmes online via the IDS website, IDS social media platforms, as well as online and onsite open days.

IDS FET will seek to establish and develop partnerships with other programme providers such as ETBs.

8. Scalability and Sustainability

IDS Further and Education Training (IDS FET) will ensure its LMS can handle an increase in programmes and an increase in enrolments.

IDS FET will adopt a responsible and sustainable financial model which will maintain and develop its online programme provision.

Appendix 4. Management Information Systems

Information Technology, Internet, and E-mail Usage (as per staff handbook)

Purpose

This document sets out the Organisation's policy with regards to acceptable internet, e-mail and Information Technology (I.T.) usage.

Scope

This policy applies to all Employees of the Organisation, and any other person using business I.T. resources.

Policy

It is the policy of this Organisation that all I.T. facilities, including telephones, e-mail internet, PCs, laptops & other mobile devices are used solely for business purposes. Use of personal email account, Skype accounts, mobile phone, etc. for business use is not permitted. Occasional personal use of all I.T facilities may be permitted with Management approval. However, excessive use for personal purposes during working time or otherwise will be treated as a serious disciplinary offence. Usage of I.T. facilities may be monitored in accordance with law, and as these are systems belonging to the Organisation, Employees should not expect privacy on these systems. At all times, the Organisation retains the right to access an Employee's files, e-mail, internet or phone records and other records relating to information technology usage to ensure compliance with the Organisation's standards and policies, to ensure that Employees' obligations to the Organisation are being complied with and to ensure that the Employee is not engaging in prohibited activities as identified in this policy or activities otherwise deemed inappropriate.

All Organisation data must be stored on the Organisation's networked server or on Organisation's cloud data storage. No Organisational data of any description should be stored on individual PCs / laptops / external drives / personal cloud drives (e.g., Google Drive), without prior written permission from Management. All Company portable devices storing personal or Company data (such as laptops) should be encrypted and password protected before they are removed from the Organisation's premises.

This policy also sets out to provide guidelines on the acceptable usage of I.T. facilities. All Employees are required to be familiar with these requirements and to adhere to same. Should an Employee have a query in this regard, they should consult their Manager.

I.T. Usage Policy

All I.T. facilities should be used solely for business purposes. Employees who have access to any password restricted systems are required not to disclose that password to any other person, except with the prior approval of their Manager. Employees should make arrangements to permit their Manager access to password restricted systems prior to or during any period of absence, where necessary. Passwords should be carefully selected so that they cannot be easily guessed. In order to ensure the security of physical data and equipment, Employees are required to ensure that laptops and other mobile devices are appropriately stored and locked away whilst in their possession.

Internet

The internet can be a valuable source of information, and when used for research purposes can be a powerful business tool. However, it is important to take care when using the internet to make decisions, as the information can be misleading, or inaccurate in some cases.

If internet access is provided, it should only be used to fulfil Organisational requirements. The internet should never be used for personal purposes during working time. Outside of working time authorisation may be sought to access the internet for personal use, e.g., to make purchases, or to conduct research for personal purposes. However, such use should be limited, and the user must accept liability for any losses incurred while using the systems for personal use.

No software should be downloaded from the internet, due to the risk of infection by viruses or infringement of licence agreements.

Only appropriate material should be accessed on the Organisation's systems. Any use of the internet to send, view, display, request, print or download pornographic or other potentially harassing or sexually harassing material, obscene material, or material which is fraudulent, offensive, or otherwise unlawful will be deemed to be a disciplinary offence and may constitute gross misconduct.

Prohibited activities include those defined elsewhere in this policy and also include wasting computer resources by, among other things, sending mass mailings or chain letters, spending excessive amounts of time on the internet for non-business purposes, using the internet for personal use or downloading and sending large files, such as pic tures, music, audio files which are not work-related, playing games, engaging in on-line chat rooms or otherwise creating unnecessary traffic or over burdening the computer system, accessing or using any material, including another Employee's computer equipment, without authorisation or under false pretences or inadvertently or otherwise, engaging in unauthorised exchanges which may result in the Organisation being contractually bound to a third party.

E-mail

The Organisation’s e-mail systems should be used for business purposes only. Limited personal use may be permitted with Management approval, however, users should have no expectation of privacy when using a resource belonging to the Organisation. Employees must also take care to ensure that they do not bring the Organisation into disrepute through the distribution of inappropriate or illegal e-mails using the Organisation’s systems.

Attachments should not be accessed unless they are received from a trusted source with which the Organisation has a business relationship. Employees should be aware of the risks associated with downloading of information from sources which cannot be trusted. Further information should be sought from Management if required.

Employees should ensure that they do not make defamatory remarks or engage in any libellous behaviour on e-mail.

Personal data should not be transmitted relating to any individual without their prior consent.

General

PCs, laptops and other mobile devices, where provided, should not be used for personal purposes, except as outlined above. Printing for personal purposes should be limited, and excessive use will be dealt with as a disciplinary offence.

Laptops and other mobile devices, if provided, should be stored in the boot of the Employee’s car when travelling, and taken indoors rather than left unattended in vehicles. If a laptop / mobile device is left in the open in a vehicle it may attract thieves or vandals, resulting in possible damage to the vehicle, and theft of the laptop as well as personal items contained within the vehicle.

Screensavers should not be downloaded from the internet, and only screensavers approved by Management may be used.

Employees should not transfer digital photographs or music, DVD or movie files onto their PC, laptop / mobile device without prior permission from their Manager. Employees must observe copyright regulations in relation to any content they upload / download to business systems.

The Organisation's I.T. systems should not be used for the purposes of engaging in secondary employment. The Organisation's telephone systems should not be used for personal use, without the consent of your Manager. Where an Employee receives a personal call, they should keep the call brief.

Social media Social networking and social media are communication tools which can have significant impact on Organisational and professional reputations. Examples of social media may include blogs, Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, You Tube, wikis etc. Employees are personally responsible for the content they publish online.

Personal usage of Social Media

You must not disclose the Organisation's name or details on your own personal social media platform. Your work e-mail address should not be used as your primary means of identification on your personal social media platform. The Organisation may impose the disciplinary process up to and including dismissal for posting inappropriate material on social networking sites in circumstances where the posts breach confidentiality, dignity at work, Anti-Bullying, Harassment or Sexual Harassment, internal policy or brings the Organisation into disrepute.

Respect your audience.

Employees should refrain from engaging in the use of inappropriate slurs and personal insults referring to work colleagues, clients and / or the Organisation, as this may lead to disciplinary action.

The Organisation's I.T. equipment, where provided, should not be used for personal purposes. The use of social media for personal purposes is prohibited on the Organisation's systems.

Using Social media for work purposes

Any contact details or business information acquired and maintained on the Organisation's systems remain the property of the Organisation. This includes any uploaded information (including personal contacts) brought by an Employee from a previous employment. Where it is a requirement as part of your role to engage in social media, the following guidelines must be adhered to:

1. Respect copyright, fair use and data protection.

2. Do not provide the Organisation’s or another's confidential or other proprietary information and never discuss the Organisation’s business performance or other sensitive matters publicly.

3. Do not cite or reference clients, partners, or suppliers without their approval. When you do make a reference, link back to the source. Do not publish anything that might allow inferences to be drawn which could embarrass or damage a client.

4. Refrain from the inappropriate use of ethnic slurs, personal insults, obscenity, or engage in any conduct that would not be acceptable in the workplace. Employees should also show proper consideration for others' privacy and for topics that may be considered objectionable or inflammatory.

5. Refrain from using the Organisation’s logos or trademarks, unless approved to do so.

6. Do not post material that could be deemed to be threatening, harassing, illegal, obscene, defamatory, slanderous or hostile towards an individual or entity.

7. Ensure that the content you are posting is accurate and reviewed for grammatical and spelling errors.

Breaches of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

Queries

All queries in relation to this policy should be addressed to the Employee’s Manager

Appendix 5. The IDS Data Protection Statement

G.8 Data Protection (as per staff handbook/policy for the organisation)

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline Employees and Employers rights and responsibilities under the Data Protection Act 1988, the Data Protection (Amendment)

Act 2003 and the General Data Protection Regulation 2018 (GDPR). The Organisation is committed to complying with its legal obligations with regard to the data protection Legislation.

The Data Protection legislation imposes obligations on Data Processors and Data Controllers regarding how they process personal data and sensitive personal data. The purpose of this policy is to assist the Organisation to meet its statutory obligations as a Data Processor and / or a Data Controller, to explain those obligations to Employees and to inform data subjects how their data will be processed. The GDPR applies to

Organisations that:

- are established in one or more Member State(s);
- process personal data (either as controller or processor, and regardless of whether or not the processing takes place in the EU) in the context of that establishment.

Scope

This policy applies to all Employees of the IDS

Policy

Under the Data Protection legislation, Employees have a right to receive information on data collection, access their personal data, have inaccuracies corrected, have information erased and have a right to data portability.

Personnel records held by Employers come within the terms of the Data Protection legislation. Employees can make access requests for information held about them. All

Employees are required to process personal data in line with this policy.

Data Protection Principles

The Organisation will comply with the data protection principles set out in the General Data Protection Regulation, 2018.

The Organisation ensures that all data is:

Obtained and processed lawfully, fairly and in a transparent manner.

The Organisation will meet this obligation by informing Employees of the purpose(s) for which their data is being processed as well as the legal basis for the processing; to whom their data may be disclosed and if the Organisation intends to transfer data to a third country or international organisation outside of the EEA.

Where processing is necessary for the purposes of the legitimate interests of the Organisation, the Organisation will inform Employees of the legitimate interests being pursued. Where the Organisation intends to record activity on CCTV, signage will be posted in full view.

The Organisation will adopt appropriate data protection notices at the point of data capture, e.g. application forms.

Collected for specified, explicit and legitimate purposes and not be further processed in a manner that is incompatible with those Purposes.

The Organisation will obtain data for purposes which are specific, lawful and clearly stated. The Organisation will inform Employees of the reasons they collect their data and will inform them of the uses to which their data will be put. Should the Organisation subsequently intend to use the data for another purpose, the consent of the Employee concerned will be sought prior to doing so unless a relevant exemption applies.

Data relating to Employees will only be processed in a manner consistent with the purposes for which it was collected. Information will only be disclosed on a need-to-know basis, and access to it will be strictly controlled.

The Organisation will not share Employee personal information for direct marketing purposes outside of the Organisation.

Adequate, relevant, and limited to what is necessary in relation to the purposes for which data are processed.

The Organisation will ensure that the data it processes are relevant to the purposes for which those data are collected. Any personal data which is not required will not be collected in the first instance. Prior to obtaining personal data, the Organisation will ensure that the information sought is essential for the purpose for which data is being obtained and that data will not be kept for longer than is necessary for the purpose for which it was collected.

Accurate and up to date.

The Organisation is required to keep Employee's data accurate and up to date. The Organisation will meet this obligation by:

- Obtaining and processing only the necessary amount of information required to provide an adequate service:
- Conducting periodic reviews to ensure that relevant data is kept accurate and up to-date:
- Conducting regular assessments in order to establish the need to keep certain Personal Data

If an Employee informs the Organisation of a change in their personal information the Organisation will ensure this information is updated on all the Organisations internal systems and all third-party providers are notified of this change where necessary.

Limited retention in a format that permits identification of data subjects for no longer than is necessary for the purposes for which the personal data are processed.

The Organisation will ensure that the data is kept in a form that permits identification of Employees for no longer than is necessary for the purposes for which the personal data was processed.

Personal data is retained for a period of time to meet certain legal obligations.

For employment statutes generally, a 3-year retention period is applicable, other retention periods apply regarding:

- Employment Permit records- 5 years (or period equal to duration of employment – whichever is longer):
- Parental Leave records - 12 years:
- Accident records - 10 years.

Once the respective retention period has elapsed, the Organisation undertakes to destroy or erase personal data.

Secure and confidential processing of data, including protection against unauthorised or unlawful processing and against accidental loss, destruction or damage.

The Organisation will undertake appropriate technical and organisational measures in order to protect the personal data under its care. Appropriate security measures will be taken to protect against unauthorised access to, unlawful processing, accidental loss, destruction or damage of any personal data held by the Organisation in its capacity as Data Controller.

Only Employees with a genuine reason for doing so may gain access to the information. Sensitive Personal Data is securely stored under lock and key- in the case of manual records / protected with firewall software and password protection- in the case of electronically stored data.

Portable devices storing personal data (such as laptops) should be encrypted and password protected before they are removed from the Organisation's premises. Confidential information will be stored securely and in relevant circumstances, it will be placed in a separate file which can easily be removed if access to general records is granted to anyone not entitled to see the confidential data.

Employees are also expected to keep Personal Data secure by adopting the following measures:

- Using secure lockable desks and cupboards. Desks and cupboards should be
- kept locked if they hold personal data.
- Paper documents should be shredded.
- Data users should ensure that individual monitors do not show Personal Data to passers-by and that they log off from their PC when it is left unattended.

If the Organisation discovers that there has been a data security breach that poses a risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals, it will report it to the Data Protection

Commissioner within 72 hours of discovery. If the breach is likely to result in a high risk to the data protection rights and freedoms of an Employee, it will inform affected individuals that there has been a breach and provide them with information about its likely consequences and the mitigation measures it has taken.

The Organisation is committed to be accountable, liable and comply with the Data Protection Principles.

Purposes for which staff records are held

Staff records are provided to the Organisation by Employees by way of a contractual and statutory requirement for the following purposes:

- the management and administration of the Organisation:
- to facilitate the payment of salary, and calculate other benefits/entitlements (Including reckonable service for the purpose of calculation of pension payments, entitlements and / or redundancy payments where relevant):
  - human resources management generally;
  - to enable the Organisation to comply with its legal obligations as an employer including the preservation of a safe, efficient working environment (including complying with its responsibilities under the Safety, Health and Welfare At Work Act 2005 and the 2007 Health and Safety Regulations).

Collection and Storage of Data

This Policy applies to all Personal and Sensitive Personal Data collected, processed and stored by the Organisation. In the course of its activities and in order to carry out its function, the Organisation processes personal data from a variety of sources. These sources include data in relation to its Employees, Volunteers, service providers, suppliers, customers and any other Data Subjects in the course of its activities.

The main categories of Personal Data held by the Organisation may include:

- Name, address and contact details, PPS number
- Details of approved absences (career breaks, maternity, parental leave, study leave etc.)
- Details of work record
- Details of any accidents / injuries sustained on Organisation property or in connection with the staff member carrying out their duties
- Details of salary and other benefits
- Personnel records including contract and offer letters, performance management information and, if applicable, records of any interactions under the headings of grievance and discipline
- Training courses completed and qualifications awarded
- Occupational health reports and sick certificates
- CCTV data
- Door access control system data / biometrics
- Email system data
- Financial data
- Human resources data
- Phone records
- Records of application and appointment to promotion posts

The Organisation will ensure that personal data will be processed in accordance with the principles of data protection, as described in the Data Protection legislation.

Personal data is normally obtained directly from the Employee concerned. In certain circumstances, it will, however, be necessary to obtain data from third parties, e.g. references from previous Employers.

Data Processing in line with Employees' Rights

The Organisation will process data in line with Employees' right to:

- receive certain information regarding the collection and further processing of their personal data.
- request access to any data held about them by a data controller.
- have inaccurate data corrected.
- have information erased.
- object to the processing of their data for direct marketing purposes.
- prevent processing that is likely to cause damage or distress to themselves or
- anyone else.
- restrict the processing of their information;
- where processing is based on consent, to withdraw that consent at any time.
- data portability.
- object to automated decision-making and profiling.

Right to opt-out

The Organisation will inform individuals that information is being collected and used for these purposes prior to doing so. Individuals have the right to object to any specific type of data processing. Where such objection is justified, the Organisation will cease processing the information unless it has a legitimate business interest that prevents this.

Right to be forgotten

Employees may request that any information held on them is deleted or removed if there is no legitimate reason for the Organisation to keep it. Any third parties who process or use that data will comply with the request.

Storage of personal data

Personal data kept by the Organisation shall normally be stored on the Employee's personnel file or HR electronic database. Highly sensitive data such as medical reports will be stored in a separate file in order to ensure the highest levels of confidentiality.

The Organisation will ensure that only authorised personnel have access to an Employee's personnel file. The Employee's Manager or Supervisor may have access to certain personal data where necessary.

The Organisation has appropriate security measures in place to protect against accidental or unlawful destruction or accidental loss, alteration, unauthorised disclosure or access.

Changes in Personal Details

Employees are responsible for ensuring that they inform their Manager of any changes in their personal details, e.g., change of address. The Organisation will endeavour to ensure personal data held by is up to date and accurate.

The Organisation is under a legal obligation to keep certain data for a specified period of Time.

In addition, the Organisation will need to keep personnel data for a period of time in order to protect its legitimate interests, e.g., Intra-group transfer of Employee / client data for administrative purposes (within the EEA)

Disclosure of Personal Data to Data Processors

In the course of its role as Data Controller, the Organisation engages a number of Data Processors to process personal data on its behalf. This may include, but is not limited to CCTV providers, payroll providers, time and attendance providers, benefit providers etc.

In each case, it is the Organisation's policy to have a contract in place with the Data Processor, outlining their obligations in relation to the personal data, the specific purpose or purposes for which they are engaged, and the requirement that they will process the data in compliance with the Data Protection legislation.

As a Data Controller, the Organisation ensures that any entity which processes personal data on its behalf (a Data Processor) does so in a manner compliant with the Data Protection legislation. This is achieved through a data processor contract.

Security and Disclosure of Data

The Organisation shall take all reasonable steps to ensure that appropriate security measures are in place to protect the confidentiality of both electronic and manual data.

Security measures will be reviewed from time-to-time having regard to the technology available, the cost and the risk of unauthorised access. Employees must implement all Company security policies and procedures, e.g., use of computer passwords, locking filing cabinets etc.

HR data will only be processed for Employment-related purposes and in general will not be disclosed to third parties, except where required or authorised by law or with the agreement of the Employee. HR files are normally stored in the locked cabinet and only nominated Individuals have access to them. Employees who have access to these files must ensure that they treat them confidentially and in accordance with the data protection principles set out above.

If Employees are in any doubt regarding their obligations, they should contact their Line Manager.

Any breach of the data protection principles is a serious matter and may lead to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

Medical Data

The Organisation may carry out pre-Employment medicals as part of the recruitment process. This data will be retained by the Organisation.

Occasionally, it may be necessary to refer Employees to the company doctor for a medical opinion and all Employees are required by their contract of Employment to attend in this case. The Organisation will receive a copy of the medical report, which will be stored in a secure manner with the utmost regard for the confidentiality of the document.

Employees are entitled to request access to their medical reports. Should an Employee wish to do so, please contact the HR department who will consult with the doctor who examined you and request the data. The final decision lies with the doctor to decide whether the data should be disclosed to you or not in accordance with Statutory Instrument No. 82 of 1989.

Employees are required to submit sick certificates in accordance with the sick pay policy.

These will be stored by the Organisation having the utmost regard for their confidentiality.

Interview Records

The Organisation will retain records of interview notes, application forms, etc. in order to ensure compliance with the Employment Equality Acts, 1998 and 2015 and with the company's Equal Opportunities Policy for at least 1 year from the date that the position was filled.

Email Monitoring

The Organisation provides email facilities and access to the internet. In order to protect against the dangers associated with email and internet use, screening software is in place to monitor email and web usage.

Mailboxes are only opened upon specific authorisation by a Manager in cases where the screening software or a complaint indicates that a particular mailbox may contain material which is dangerous or offensive; where there is a legitimate work reason or in legitimate interest of the Organisation.

Close Circuit Monitoring

The Organisation has close circuit television cameras located at the entrance and two

cameras in the corridor of the IDS HQ office building. This is necessary in order to protect against theft or pilferage, for the security of staff and Company property.

Access to the recorded material will be strictly limited to authorised personnel. Close circuit surveillance is not used to manage performance.

The Organisation will act at all times in a fair and reasonable manner and will respect the user's right of privacy under the Data Protection legislation. Any information

collected through monitoring will be used only for the purpose for which the monitoring was introduced and will be deleted when no longer required.

Employees are granted access only to information systems and services which are necessary to carry out the responsibilities of their role or function. Each user must

respect and protect the privacy and confidentiality of the information systems they access and the personal data processed by those systems. When an Employee's role or responsibilities change, he or she may be denied access to systems relating to his or her previous position.

Access Requests

Employees are entitled to request data held about them on computer or in relevant filing sets. This includes personnel records held by the Organisation. The Organisation will ensure that such requests are forwarded to the Line Manager in a timely manner, to enable them to process the request within the required timeframe. To make a subject access request, an Employee should send the request to their Line Manager. In some cases, the Organisation may need to ask for proof of identification before the request can be processed. The Organisation will inform the Employee if it needs to verify her /his identity and the documents it requires.

A data access request will be responded to within 1 month of receipt of the request though this period may be extended for up to 2 further months where necessary, taking into account the complexity and number of requests. The Organisation will write to the individual within 1 month of receiving the original request to tell her / him if this is the case.

Information will be provided in electronic form if the individual has made a request electronically, unless he / she agrees otherwise. Documents are provided free of charge, unless the request is "manifestly unfounded or excessive", in which case a fee of

€6.35 may be applied. A subject access request is likely to be manifestly unfounded or excessive where it repeats a request to which the Organisation has already responded.

If an Employee makes a data access request, the Organisation will inform her / him of:

- The purposes of the processing.
- The categories of personal data concerned.
- To whom the personal data has been or will be disclosed.
- Whether the data will be or has been transferred outside of the EU.
- The period for which the data will be stored, or the criteria to be used to
- determine retention periods.
- The right to make a complaint to the DPC (Data Controller).
- The right to request rectification or deletion of the personal data.
- Whether the data has been subject to automated decision making.
- Formal requests, invoking the right to access to personal data must be made in writing.

Employees are only entitled to data about themselves and will not be provided with data relating to other Employees or third parties. It may be possible to block out the data relating to a third party or conceal her / his identity, and if this is possible the company may do so.

Data that is classified as the opinion of another person, will be provided unless it was given on the understanding that it will be treated confidentially. Employees who express

opinions about other Employees in the course of their Employment should bear in mind that their opinion may be disclosed in an access request, e.g., performance appraisals.

An Employee who is dissatisfied with the outcome of an access request has the option of using the Organisation's grievance procedure.

Retention of Personal Data

Personal data is retained for a period of time to meet certain legal obligations. Once the respective retention period has elapsed, the Organisation undertakes to destroy or erase personal data.

Specifically, the following rules apply for personal details relating to Employees:

Legal basis	Data & Record Keeping Requirement
Organisation of Working Time Act 1997	Hours worked (Time sheets), Medical certificates, Annual leave & special leave requests to be retained for 3 years.
Protection of Young Persons Act 1996	To be retained for 3 years.
National Minimum Wage Act 2000	Salary information – pay slips to be retained for 3 years.
Protection of Employment Acts, 1977-2007	To be retained for 3 years. Records in relation to collective redundancies to be retained for 3 years.
Minimum Notice and Terms of Employment Acts 1973-2005	To be retained for 1 year.
Terms of Employment (Information) Acts 1994 – 2014	A copy of the written statement to be held for the duration of the employee's employment and for 1 year thereafter. The Statute of Limitations provides that a claim for breach of contract may be brought for up to 6 years from the date of

	breach. Claimants have 1 year from the commencement of proceedings to serve such proceedings on a defendant. It is recommended, therefore, that all contractual and related documentation be retained for the duration of employment and 7 years from the termination or expiration of the contract.
Payment of Wages Act 1991	To be retained for 1 year.
Carer's Leave Acts 2001-2006	To be retained for 8 years.
Parental Leave (Amendment) Act 2019	Parental Leave and Force Majeure leave records to be kept for 12 years.
Paternity Leave and Benefit Act 2016	Must be kept for 8 years.
Employment Permits Acts 2003 to 2014	The records to be retained for 5 years or for the duration of employment.
Safety Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005	Records containing full details of all accidents or dangerous occurrences to be kept for 10 years from the date of the accident and notified to the Health & Safety Authority at the time of the incident.
Best Practice	**Data & Record Keeping Recommendation**
Employment Equality Acts 1998-2015	Records relating to the recruitment process should be retained for a 1 year period. 1 year as complaints can be made within 6 months from the date of an alleged discrimination which can be extended to 12 months in exceptional circumstances. Adjudication Officer authorised under the Act to inspect an employer's records during an investigation. Discrimination claims may result in awards in respect of arrears of up to 6 years pay so records should be kept for at least 6 years.
Equal Status Act 2000-2011	To be retained for 1 year.
Maternity Protection Act 1994-2004	To be retained for a minimum of 1 year.
Adoptive Leave Act 1995-2005	To be retained for a minimum of 1 year.

Parent's Leave and Benefit Act 2019	To be retained for a minimum of 1 year.
Unfair Dismissals Acts 1977-2015	To be retained for a minimum of 1 year.
Redundancy Payments Acts 1967-2014	To be retained for a minimum of 1 year.
Protected Disclosures Act 2014	To be retained for at least 1 year.
Transfer of Undertakings Records - EC (Safeguarding of Employees' Rights on Transfer of Undertakings) Regulations 2003	To be retained for at least 1 year.

Responsibilities

Management will endeavour to ensure that this policy is communicated to all Employees and will ensure that the policy is maintained and updated in line with legislative changes.

Employees are expected comply with this policy and to raise issues of concern to their Manager.

Failure by Employees to process personal data in compliance with this policy may result in disciplinary proceedings up to and including dismissal.

Complaints

Employees have the rights to lodge a complaint to the Data Protection Commissioner if they believe their rights under the Data Protection legislation are not being complied with by the Organisation.

Appendix 6. Terms of Reference of the IDS Quality Assurance Committee

Introduction

The purpose of establishing the Quality Assurance Committee is to support the education, development, and lifelong learning of Deaf and Hard of Hearing learners in our Further Education and Training service. It is also to identify, and where possible, provide accessible educational and training services, resources and support required to achieve learners' pathways to employment.

The Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) is responsible for the steering, development, and maintenance of the Quality Assurance (QA) systems at the Irish Deaf Society (IDS) Further Education and Training by ensuring that policies and procedures are compliant with national and international educational benchmarks. The committee will ensure that the QA systems are compliant with the QQI Education and Training Act 2012 and their Core Statutory QA Guidelines.

The QAC is an internal governance group within the Irish Deaf Society whose role is to uphold academic standards within the organisation. It is responsible for the development and implementation of Quality processes and activities across academic and administrative areas of IDS Further Education and Training and adherence to the legal recognition of ISL under the Irish Sign Language Act 2017. The Committee ensures the separation of academic and commercial decision making, and the separation of responsibility for programme approval from programme development.

Appointment of the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC)

The QAC is initially appointed by senior management at IDS, in consultation with the chairperson of the Committee. Once established the QAC has control over its own membership selection subject to the membership (and other) terms listed below.

Membership

The QAC shall be made up of at least five members, having a learners' representative and the majority shall be independent members. The term of the QAC shall be 2 years immediately after appointment. The membership of the QAC shall include the following:

- Independent Chairperson
- IDS Quality Assurance Manager
- IDS Board Director
- Representative from a Higher-Level Education Institute (Independent)
- Expert in Deaf Education and Irish Sign Language (Independent)
- Teaching staff Representative
- Learners Representative x 2

Other members as nominated by the Committee (for specific purpose or time)

Only members of the QAC have the right to attend committee meetings. However, additional individuals may be invited to attend for all or part of any meeting, as and when appropriate.

Secretary

The IDS FET Quality Assurance Manager (or their nominee) is the secretary of the QAC.

Chairperson

The Chair of the QAC will be an independent member and is initially appointed by the Irish Deaf Society Chairperson, a decision which is ratified by the QAC, once the QAC has been formed. Future Chairs will be proposed and agreed by the QAC.

The office of the Chair will be for an initial period of two years, with bi-annual elections thereafter. No Chair may be in office for a period of more than two consecutive terms.

Duties of the Quality Assurance Committee

1. The Quality Assurance Committee is a body convened to provide guidance, advice and recommendations to the Irish Deaf Society Further Education and Training Department (FET). It does not have a decision-making role in terms of FET operations.

2. Monitor and review the design, development, and implementation of programmes in accordance with IDS functions including analysis of learner enrolment data, attrition, completion and progression rates, internal and external stakeholder feedback and learner achievement.

3. Assuring the quality of awards for which the IDS has been granted validation and maintaining standards in accordance with core QQI policies and the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ).

4. Review academic quality assurance policies and procedures at IDS to ensure compliance with accreditation body guidelines (i.e., QQI) and make recommendations to management.

5. Adjudicate on complaints or appeals that are relevant to the work of the Committee.

6. Promoting and ensuring adherence to current pedagogical best practice including the use of appropriate learning technologies and teaching modalities.

7. Review the adequacy of resources at IDS (e.g., trainers, facilities, equipment, training materials, learner supports).

8. Ensure the provision by IDS management of opportunities and resources for Continuous Professional Development of staff.

9. Ensure that IDS provides information that is complete, accurate and accessible to all relevant stakeholders in a timely manner.

10. To propose, review and approve new programmes/modules and modifications to existing programmes.

11. To ensure action plans for the improvement and evaluation of programmes and related activities are implemented.

12. To identify risks concerning IDS academic affairs and learners, communicating these risks to the IDS Board and provide considerations or recommendations regarding such risks.

13. To facilitate the learner voice through the learner representative on the QAC and by responding to learner feedback collected through learner surveys.

14. Approve the appointment of external QA personnel (e.g., External Authenticators, External Evaluators).

15. To coordinate and monitor the effectiveness of learner supports, including Irish Sign Language supports, pastoral care, learning resources and LMS resources.

16. To make recommendations on the financial and non-financial supports and programmes available for research and development.

Frequency of Meetings (location or online)

i. The QAC shall meet no less than four times a year. Meetings shall occur at regular intervals and frequency as necessary for the QAC to conduct its business and fulfil its obligations.

ii. Seven (7) days' notices of each meeting must be given. Supporting documentation shall be sent to QAC members and to other attendees, as appropriate, at the same time as the notice.

Attendance at Meetings

The quorum required to convene a meeting is four members unless otherwise agreed by a majority of members. The chair or chair's nominee should be present.

Motions and Voting

Motions can be proposed and seconded by members if there are no objections. Motions can be carried by a simple majority of votes cast at the meeting. The QAC should aim for consensus agreement wherever possible.

The chair, as a member of the QAC, has a casting vote. In the event of a tied vote, the chair has a second or casting vote.

QAC Records

i. The Secretary of the QAC shall ensure that accurate minutes of all QAC meetings proceedings and resolutions are recorded, including recording the names of those present and in attendance.

ii. If a member cannot attend a meeting, they can delegate for the purpose of that meeting only. Members who continually miss meetings will be asked to resign as decided by the QAC itself. Members should advise the secretariat in advance at the earliest opportunity if they cannot attend meetings.

iii. Minutes of QAC meetings shall be circulated within a reasonable time after the meetings to all members of the Committee and once agreed, to all other members of the Board, unless a conflict of interest exists.

Conflict of Interest

All QAC members have a duty to carry out their responsibilities in a manner that serves and protects the interest of the public. As such, they should not engage in any activities or decision making concerning any matters where they have a direct or indirect personal or financial interest.

A member who could reasonably be considered to have a conflict of interest should make this known in writing to the Chair who will decide what action (if any) is required to address the conflict.

Confidentiality of QAC Information

Meetings of the QAC are confidential unless otherwise stated. No QAC business may be disclosed to parties outside the QAC without written permission from the Chair.

Public Communications

A member of the QAC may be invited to attend any meeting as a representative of IDS to any Educational and Training events or any related areas for Deaf Education. The invitation shall be a discussed in advance of the meeting and agreed with CEO and Quality Assurance Manager.

Review

Terms of Reference for the QAC are reviewed on an annual basis.

Appendix 7. Terms of Reference of the IDS Student Council

The IDS Further Education and Training (FET) Student Council

The Student Council provides a representative structure through which students can become involved in the affairs of the IDS FET Department, working in partnership with Management and staff for the benefit of students.

The key functions of the Student Council are:

- To promote regular communication in the IDS FET community.
- To represent the views of the student body to FET Management regarding facilities and services.
- Contributing to the development of FET policies and procedures which are reviewed from time to time. The student contribution to this process is important for the successful development of policies and procedures.
- Organising social and cultural events from time to time, either online or in person in consultation with the IDS FET Quality Assurance Manager, who is the staff representative liaising with the Student Council.

It is not the function of the Student Council to discuss or comment on matters relating to the employment or professional affairs of the management, teaching staff or other staff of the IDS, or to become involved in any issues that fall within the professional competence of staff.

Regular communication between the Student Council and IDS management and staff provides the basis for building a good and lasting relationship, based on trust and respect, between students and the rest of the IDS FET community. Much can be achieved where all members of the IDS community work together towards common goals, and good communication is vital if a common understanding is to be reached on what those goals are, and how best to achieve them.

Membership

1. The student Council has a maximum of 8 members, with an equal number of Deaf and Hearing learners. Each October all registered students are invited to put their names forward for membership of the Council by emailing STUDENTCOUNCIL@IRISHDEAFSOCIETY.IE
2. Where more than 8 students apply to join the Council, FET Management will select 8 with a view to as wide a representation of classes as possible. There may also be elections held if possible.
3. Each Council member will be given an IDS email address, and the list of those addresses will be circulated to all students via our teaching staff, so that any student who wishes to contact council members can do so by email.
4. The term of office of Council members is one year, from October to October the following year.

5. The Council meets for one hour once a month during the academic year from October to May via video conferencing (Zoom or Teams or Skype)
6. The IDS will provide ISL interpreters for the meetings. The schedule of dates for meetings for the year will be agreed at the first meeting.
7. IDS will organise and attend the first meeting to assist the Council in commencing its work, and the IDS FET Quality Assurance Manager is available to attend Council meetings thereafter when requested to do so.
8. The CEO of the IDS may wish to address the Student Council on occasions on key issues affecting the IDS FET community.

At the first meeting Council members elect a Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson, a Secretary and a Communications Officer.

The role of the Officers

Chairperson

The Chairperson is responsible for presiding over meetings of the Council. The Chairperson, with the Secretary, prepares the agenda for each meeting and, where necessary, signs the minutes (see below) once the Council has agreed them. Where a vote is held at a Council meeting, and the votes are divided equally, the Chairperson generally has the casting vote. The Chairperson may also be designated to represent the Council at meetings with IDS FET management.

Deputy Chairperson

The Deputy Chairperson is responsible for assisting the Chairperson, and when the Chairperson is absent from a meeting s/he assumes the role of the Chairperson for that meeting.

Secretary

The Secretary, with the Chairperson, prepares the agenda for each meeting and the Secretary then circulates it to all the members of the Council either in advance of the meeting or at the start of the meeting. This will involve consulting with the other Council members in order to decide what will be included on the agenda. All agendas should include a provision for 'Any Other Business'; this allows Council members to raise a matter for discussion in the event that it has not been included on the agenda. The Secretary also keeps a record of Council meetings and any decisions taken by the Council (the minutes). If necessary, these minutes can be circulated to all members of the Council either with the agenda for the next meeting or at the start of the next meeting. The Council can be given the opportunity to make any changes to the minutes before the Chairperson signs them.

Communications Officer

The function of the Communications Officer is to organise an e-newsletter from time to time in both ISL and English language on behalf of the Council for circulation to the students via our teaching staff to keep students updated.

IDS Student Council Constitution

(1) The aim of the Student Council

The aim of the Student Council is to work in partnership with FET Management and staff for the benefit of the whole FET community. The Student Council seeks to build a relationship based on mutual respect and trust with all in the IDS and supports the staff and management and in their efforts to create and maintain an environment conducive to educational and personal development. As part of that process, the Student Council seeks to provide a line of communication between students, management, and staff, representing the views of the student body on matters of concern to them.

(2) The work of the Student Council

The Student Council will undertake a programme of activities which will support students. In planning its activities, the Student Council will consult with the Management and staff.

(3) Student Council Officers

The Student Council will appoint a Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson, Secretary and Communications Officer. Each will normally hold office for a term of one year.

(4) Meetings and decision-making

The Student Council will meet once a month from October to May each year. Meetings can be called by the Chairperson, or by 3 or more members of the council. All council members must be given at least 1 weeks' notice of a meeting. At least one third of council members have to attend for a decision to be taken. When making a decision any member of the council may call for a vote to be held, and where the votes are divided evenly the Chairperson will have the casting vote

(5) Changes to the constitution

A vote must be held regarding any changes to this constitution. Proposed changes must be circulated to all members of the council at least one week in advance of the vote. At least two thirds of the council must be present for the vote. Any changes to the constitution must be discussed in advance with FET Management.

Appendix 8. Terms of Reference of the Teaching Staff Forum

THE IDS TEACHING STAFF FORUM

The purpose of the Teaching Staff Forum is to facilitate teaching staff to come together as a community of practice to share ideas and approaches to working with all learners FET, Deaf learners and Hearing learners.

The Forum will meet for one hour every two months during the academic year from September to June via online video conferencing via Zoom

A sample schedule for the current year includes meetings in the months of January, February, April, and June, commencing at 3:30 p.m. each day.

The key functions of the Teaching Staff Forum are:

- Opportunity for teaching staff to seek advice and share good practice with colleagues.
- Discuss any questions on teaching methodology or teaching practice.
- Discuss ideas for professional development relating to Learning Management System
- Analyse areas for reflection, improvement and discuss issues of concern.
- Enhance teaching and learning partnership with other colleagues, staff and students.
- Develop inclusive and innovative ideas that improve students learning and success.
- Develop innovative ideas to improve student engagement, in both blended + onsite and online modes
- Create better management include standards, programme, facilities, infrastructures, quality assurance.

There is no formal structure or agenda to these forums, but if there is anything you like to raise with us in advance of our first meeting, please email at forum@irishdeafsociety.ie

Topics, issues, concerns, or anything can be discussed on the day by teaching staff, if time allows.

The forum is a good an opportunity for colleagues to share community of best practice and support everyone who teaches with an overall goal to build up teaching, learning and digital capacities.

Appendix 9. Terms of Reference of the IDS Digital Education Committee

The Digital Education Committee reports to the Quality Assurance Committee

TERMS OF REFERENCES OF THE IRISH DEAF SOCIETY'S FURTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING DIGITAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE (DEC)

The purpose of establishing the Digital Education Committee is to support the education, development, and lifelong learning of Deaf and Hard of Hearing learners in our Further Education and Training service. It is also to identify, and where possible, provide accessible educational and training services, resources and support required to achieve learners' pathways to employment.

The Digital Education Committee (DEC) is responsible for the steering, development, and maintenance to the use of our Learning Management Systems at the Irish Deaf Society (IDS) Further Education and Training. It also provides advice and recommendations on educational / online learning for teaching, learning, assessment, and research. It is responsible for the development and implementation of Quality processes and activities across our digital learning/education platforms.

Appointment of the Digital Education Committee (DEC)

The DEC is initially appointed by senior management at IDS, in consultation with the chairperson of the Committee. Once established the DEC has control over its own membership selection subject to the membership (and other) terms listed below.

Membership

The DEC shall be made up of at least six members, having a learners' representative and the majority shall be independent members. The term of the DEC shall be 2 years immediately after appointment. The membership of the DEC shall include the following:

- IDS Course Manager
- IDS Digital Education Officer
- External (independent) Expert in Learning Management Systems
- External (independent)) Expert in ICT and Deaf Education
- External (independent) Expert in ICT and Learning
- IDS Teaching staff Representative

Other members as nominated by the Committee (for specific purpose or time)

Only members of the DEC have the right to attend committee meetings. However, additional individuals may be invited to attend for all or part of any meeting, as and when appropriate.

Secretary

FET Course Manager (or their nominee) is the secretary of the DEC

Chairperson

The Chair of the DEC will be an independent member and is initially appointed by the Irish Deaf Society Chairperson but once the DEC has been formed, future Chairs will be proposed and agreed by the DEC. The office of the Chair will be for an initial period of two years, with bi-annual elections thereafter. No Chair may be in office for a period of more than two consecutive terms.

Duties of the Digital Education Committee

1. The Digital Education Committee is to provide guidance, advice and recommendations to the Irish Deaf Society Further Education and Training Department (FET). It does not have a decision-making role in terms of FET operations.

2. Monitor and review the design, development, and implementation of LMS programmes in accordance with IDS functions.

3. Review academic quality assurance policies and procedures at IDS to ensure compliance with accreditation body guidelines and make recommendations to management.

4. Provide support for all systems, including advice and guidance, reviewing new solutions and features on range of technology enhance learning and assessment initiatives.

5. Provide guidance and advice on training and support for FET wide implementation to help learners, teaching staff, programme teams, and Digital team to progress.

6. Promoting and ensuring adherence to current pedagogical best practice including the use of appropriate learning technologies and teaching modalities.

7. Review the adequacy of resources at IDS (e.g., trainers, facilities, equipment, training materials, learner supports)

8. Ensure the provision by IDS management of opportunities and resources for Continuous Professional Development of staff.

9. To ensure action plans for the improvement and evaluation of programmes and related activities are implemented with best practice use of Learning Management Systems.

10. To identify risks concerning IDS academic affairs and learners, communicating these risks to the Management and provide considerations or recommendations regarding such risks.

11. To facilitate the learner voice through the learner and teaching staff representative on the DEC and by responding to learner and teaching staff feedback collected though learner surveys.

12. To coordinate and monitor the effectiveness of learner supports, including Irish Sign Language supports, learning resources and LMS resources.

13. To make recommendations on the financial and non-financial supports and programmes available for research and development.

Frequency of Meetings (location or online)

- **i.** The DEC shall meet at least two times a year. Meetings shall occur at regular intervals and frequency as necessary for the DEC to conduct its business and fulfil its obligations.
- **ii.** Seven (7) days' notices of each meeting must be given. Supporting documentation shall be sent to DEC members and to other attendees, as appropriate, at the same time as the notice.

Attendance at Meetings

The quorum required to convene a meeting is three members unless otherwise agreed by a majority of members. The chairperson or chairperson nominee should be in attendance.

Motions and Voting

Motions can be proposed and seconded by members if there are no objections. Motions can be carried by a simple majority of votes cast at the meeting. The DEC should aim for consensus agreement wherever possible. The chair, as a member of the DEC, has a casting or second vote.

DEC Records

i. The Secretary of the DEC shall ensure that accurate minutes of all DEC meetings proceedings and resolutions are recorded, including recording the names of those present and in attendance.
ii. If a member cannot attend a meeting, they can delegate for the purpose of that meeting only. Members who continually miss meetings will be asked to resign as decided by the DEC itself. Members should advise the secretariat in advance at the earliest opportunity if they cannot attend meetings.

Conflict of Interest

All DEC members have a duty to carry out their responsibilities in a manner that serves and protects the interest of the public. As such, they should not engage in any activities or decision making concerning any matters where they have a direct or indirect personal or financial interest. A member who could reasonably be considered to have a conflict of interest should make this known in writing to the Chair who will decide what action (if any) is required to address the conflict.

Confidentiality of DEC

Information Meetings of the DEC are confidential unless otherwise stated. No DEC business may be disclosed to parties outside the DEC without written permission from the Chair.

Public Communications

A member of the DEC may be invited to attend any meeting as a representative of IDS to any Educational and Training events or any related areas for Deaf Education. The invitation shall be a discussed in advance of the meeting and agreed with CEO and Quality Assurance Manager.

Review

Terms of Reference for the DEC are reviewed on an annual basis.

Appendix 10. Agenda for Annual Programme Review Meeting

Agenda for Annual Programme Review Meeting
IDS FET Annual Programme Review Meeting
Programme Name:
Date: DD/MM/YYYY
Participants:

AGENDA

- Programme Enrolment, Completion and Certification Numbers for Academic Year.
- Learner Feedback on Programme from Surveys and Learner Representatives.
- Issues arising during the Year
- Teaching Staff Feedback
- Programme Content, Resources and Related Services regarding blended/onsite learning environment
- Programme content, resources and Related Services regarding on-line learning environment
- The balance of synchronous and asynchronous mode is appropriate in both the blended learning and onsite delivery mode
- QI External Authenticator Feedback
- Recommendations for Next Academic Year

A.O.B

All staff please sign the Attendance Register for the Meeting.

Appendix 11. Summary of the IDS Governance Code and Standards

Core Standards for advancing charitable purpose	IDS Standards	Evidence
Be clear about the purpose of your charity and be able to explain this in simple terms to anyone who asks.	IDS purpose, objectives, core values, and mission statement are reviewed by the board once a year.	IDS Constitution 2021 Main and Subsidiary objects in the M & A Annual Directors Declaration Form.
Consider whether or not any private benefit arises. If a private benefit arises, consider if it is reasonable, necessary, and ancillary to the public benefit that your charity provides.	Annually signed Directors Declaration including Code of Conduct.	IDS constitution details rules on private benefit and expenses. Remuneration policy Board meetings after AGM
Agree an achievable plan for at least the next year that sets out what you will do to advance your purpose.	IDS develop Statements of Strategy to inform annual work plans. Each year the board approves an operational plan and a budget for the following year.	IDS Strategic Plan Annual Budget Annual Operational Budget
Make sure your charity has the resources it needs to do the activities you plan. If you don't have the resources, you need to show a plan for getting those resources.	Our activities are funded annually through grant aid, state support and fundraising. Grant aid and support is approved in advance and services are planned and delivered on that basis. IDS also apply for ad Hoc grants for smaller projects	Board meeting agenda and minutes Annual Report Annual Budget and monthly updates on projections Monthly Financial Reports to the board

	that meets our purpose and activities are arranged as appropriate.	
From time to time, review what you are doing to make sure you are still: acting in line with your charity's purpose; and providing public benefit.	IDS Strategic Planning cycles. Review our services. Any purpose changes require constitution changes / members approval	IDS Strategic Plan IDS Constitution
Additional Standards for advancing our charitable purpose		
Develop your charity's strategic plan and associated Operational plans.	IDS goals outlined in a Strategic Plan and reviewed every 3 years. Each year the board approves an annual operational plan and a budget to achieve goals set out in the strategic plan.	IDS Strategic plans Operational Plan Annual budget
Make sure there is an appropriate system in place to: monitor progress against your plans; and evaluate the effectiveness of the work of your charity.	Strategic Meetings with CEO and Board directors. Data collection on education and training services is input to the PLSS and QBS reporting systems. Data collection on advocacy services are reported to the board. Feedback from Learners and service users (FET and Advocacy)	Board meeting agenda and minutes Data reporting on PLSS and QQI systems CEO and managers' reports to the board

From time to time, consider the advantages and disadvantages of working in partnership with other charities, including merging or dissolving (winding up).	This is included on board meeting agenda once a year.	Board meeting minutes Board meeting agenda calendar

Appendix 12. The IDS Constitution

IDS Constitution 2021
Constitution of the Irish Deaf Society,
The National Association of the Deaf

1. Name – The name of the Company is Irish Deaf Society, The National Association of the Deaf

2. Company type

The Company is a company limited by guarantee, registered under Part 18 of the Companies Act 2014.

3. Main Object

The main object for which the Company is established (the "Main Object") is

a) To be a Deaf led organisation and to empower and enable Deaf people to participate in positive action to further their independence and full and equal participation in the community.

b) To promote the status of Irish Sign Language (hereinafter called "ISL), which is the language of the Deaf community, as their primary means of communication.

c) To advance public education concerning the rights of Deaf people.

d) To advance public education concerning civil and human rights in accordance with Irish and International law, directives, conventions, and protocol including the ISL Act 2017 and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the World Federation of the Deaf and the European Union of the Deaf.

e) To provide assistance and support to Deaf persons who are affected by general or specific societal issues, and to promote awareness of Deaf people and Irish Sign Language and related issues amongst the wider community.

f) To advance and promote the Company as a Disabled Peoples' Organisation as defined and characterised by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, as amended, and modified from time to time.

c) To advance public education concerning the rights of Deaf people.

d) To advance public education concerning civil and human rights in accordance with Irish and International law, directives, conventions, and protocol including the ISL Act 2017 and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the World Federation of the Deaf and the European Union of the Deaf.

e) To provide assistance and support to Deaf persons who are affected by general or specific societal issues, and to promote awareness of Deaf people and Irish Sign Language and related issues amongst the wider community.

f) To advance and promote the Company as a Disabled Peoples' Organisation as defined and characterised by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, as amended, and modified from time to time.

4. Subsidiary Objects – As objects incidental and ancillary to the attainment of the Main Object, the Company shall have the following subsidiary objects:

a) To advance public education (including research) concerning the rights of Deaf people.

b) To promote human and citizenship rights for Deaf people in Ireland:

c) To develop, manage and promote specific activity in furtherance to the objects of the Company:

5. Powers – The Company shall in addition to the powers conferred on it by law have the following powers which are exclusively subsidiary and ancillary to the Main Object and which powers may only be exercised in promoting the Main Object. Any income generated by the exercise of these powers is to be applied to the promotion of the Main Object:

a) To solicit and procure by any lawful means and to accept and receive any donation of property of any nature and any devise, legacy or annuity, subscription, gift, contribution or fund, including by means of payroll giving or other similar arrangements, and including (but so as not to restrict the generality of the foregoing) the holding of lotteries in accordance with the law for the purpose of promoting the Main Object, and to apply to such purpose the capital as well as the income of any such legacy, donation or fund, and to sell and dispose of, to lease and accept surrenders of leases of and manage all real estate (including leaseholds) so received and not required to be or capable of being occupied for the purposes of the Company and generally to manage, invest and expend all monies belonging to the Company in furtherance of its Main Object.

6. Income and Property

a) The income and property of the Company shall be applied solely towards the promotion of Main Object(s) as set forth in this Constitution. No portion of the Company's income and property shall be paid or transferred directly or indirectly by way of dividend, bonus or otherwise howsoever by way of profit to members of the Company.

b) No Director shall be appointed to any office of the Company paid by salary or fees or receive any remuneration or other benefit in money or money's worth from the Company. However, nothing shall prevent any payment in good faith by the Company of:

(a) reasonable and proper remuneration to any member or servant of the Company (not being a Director or Secretary) for any services rendered to the Company:

(b) interest at a rate not exceeding 1% above the Euro Interbank Offered Rate (Euribor) per annum on money lent by Directors or other members of the Company to the Company:

(c) reasonable and proper rent for premises demised and let by any member of the Company (including any Director or Secretary) to the Company:

(d) reasonable and proper out-of-pocket expenses incurred by any Director or Secretary in connection with their attendance to any matter affecting the Company:

(e) fees, remuneration or other benefit in money or money's worth to any company of which a Director or Secretary may be a member holding not more than one hundredth part of the issued capital of such company.

(f) insurance premia in respect of any officer's liability indemnity insurance policy or policies:

g) an indemnity in respect of any liabilities properly incurred in running the Company (including the costs of a successful defence to criminal proceedings)

(h) Nothing shall prevent any payment by the Company to a person pursuant to an agreement entered into in compliance with section 89 of the Charities Act, 2009 (as for the time being amended, extended or replaced).

7. Additions, alterations, or amendments

The Company must ensure that the Charities Regulator has a copy of its most recent Constitution. If it is proposed to make an amendment to the Constitution of the Company which requires the prior approval of the Charities Regulator, advance notice in writing of the proposed changes must be given to the Charities Regulator for approval, and the amendment shall not take effect until such approval is received.

8. Winding Up

If upon the winding up or dissolution of the Company there remains, after satisfaction of all debts and liabilities, any property whatsoever, it shall not be paid to or distributed among the members of the Company. Instead, such property shall be given or transferred to some other charitable institution or institutions having main objects similar to the main objects of the Company. The institution or institutions to which the property is to be given or transferred shall prohibit the distribution of their income and property among their members to an extent at least as great as is imposed on the Company under or by virtue of Clause 6 hereof. Members of the Company shall select the relevant institution or institutions at or before the time of dissolution, and if and so far as effect cannot be given to such provisions, then the property shall be given or transferred to some charitable object with the agreement of the Charities Regulator. Final accounts will be prepared and submitted that will include a section that identifies and values any assets transferred along with the details of the recipients and the terms of the transfer.

9. Limited Liability

The liability of the members is limited.

10. Undertaking to Contribute

Every member of the Company undertakes to contribute to the assets of the Company, if the Company is wound up while he or she is a member or is wound up within one year after the date on which he or she ceases to be a member, for

(a) payment of the debts and liabilities of the Company contracted before he or she ceases to be a member, and the costs, charges, and expenses of winding up; and

(b) the adjustment of the rights of the contributories among themselves, such amount as may be required, not exceeding €1.

Part Two – Articles of Association

Preliminary (Article 1)

PRELIMINARY

1. (a) In these Articles, unless there is something in the subject or context inconsistent herewith:

The “Act” means the Companies Act, 2014.

The “Company” means the above-named Company.

The “Directors” means the members for the time being of the board of directors of the Company and “Director” shall be construed accordingly.

The “Secretary” means any person appointed to perform the duties of the Secretary of the Company.

The “Seal” means the Common Seal of the Company.

Expressions referring to writing shall, unless the contrary intention appears, be construed as including reference to printing, lithography, photography, and any other modes of representing or reproducing words in visible form.

(b) Unless the contrary intention appears, words or expressions contained in these Articles shall bear the same meaning as in the Act, or any statutory modification thereof in force at the date at which these Articles become binding on the Company.

(c) The powers and discretions set out in these Articles are to be used only for the attainment of the Main Object of the Company as set out in Clause 3 of the Memorandum of Association and any income generated from the exercise of the said powers and discretions is to be applied for the Main Object of the Company only.

MEMBERS

2. For the purposes of registration the number of members of the Company is taken to be seven but the Company may from time to time register an increase or decrease in the number of members PROVIDED THAT the number of members shall not be decreased to less than three without the prior agreement of the Revenue Commissioners.

3. The members of the Company shall be (i) the subscribers to the Memorandum of Association and (ii) such other persons as the Directors shall from time to time admit to membership and as shall sign a written consent to become a member.

4. The rights and liabilities attaching to any members of the Company may be varied from time to time by a Special Resolution of the Company.

RIGHTS OF MEMBERS

5. Membership of the Company is not transferable and shall cease: -

(a) on the member’s death or bankruptcy:

(b) if the member resigns by serving notice in writing to the Directors of the Company at its registered office.

(c) upon the Directors requiring a member to resign their membership by serving notice upon the member terminating their membership, to expire no earlier than the date of service of the notice of termination

(d) upon failure to pay the member's subscriptions in accordance with Article 7

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS

7. The Directors shall be entitled from time to time to determine any annual subscriptions to be payable by any member of the Company. Such subscriptions should be paid on or before of the 1 January in each year but in any event in advance of the AGM. A person becoming a member of the Company after 1 January in any year may be required by the Directors to pay the entire Annual Subscription in respect of that year. In the event that any member shall cease to be a member prior to 31 December in any year that member shall not be entitled to any rebate of their Annual Subscription paid for that year. The terms and conditions attached to each form of membership subscription shall be determined by the Board of Directors in its absolute discretion from time to time.

(Articles 8-44 of the IDS Constitution deal the Rights of Members, General Meetings, and Voting Procedures at Meetings. Full constitution available on the IDS website www.irishdeafsociety.ie)

DIRECTORS

45. The number of the Directors shall be not less than three (3) and unless and until determined by the Company in general meeting, not more than eight (8). At least two thirds of the Directors will be Deaf.

46. No remuneration shall be payable under any circumstances to any of the Directors in respect of their services as Director, or on any Committee of the Directors to which the Directors may delegate powers under Article 64. The Directors may be paid all travelling, hotel and other expenses properly incurred by them in attending and returning from meetings of the Directors or any committee of the Directors or general meetings of the Company or otherwise in connection with the business of the Company.

47. The business of the Company shall be managed by the Directors, who may pay all expenses incurred in promoting and registering the Company, and may exercise all such powers of the Company as are not, by the Act or by these Articles required to be exercised by the Company in general meeting, subject nevertheless to the provisions of the Act and of these Articles and to such directions, not being inconsistent with the aforesaid provisions, as the Company in general meeting may (by special resolution) give. No such direction given by the Company in general meeting shall invalidate any prior act of the Directors which would have been valid if that direction had not been given.

48. Without prejudice to Section 40 of the Act, and subject to Article 64, the Directors may delegate any of their powers to such person or persons as they think fit, including committees; any such committee shall, in the exercise of the powers so delegated, conform to any regulations that may be imposed on it by the Directors.

49. All cheques, promissory notes, drafts, bills of exchange and other negotiable instruments, and all receipts for moneys paid to the Company shall be signed, drawn, accepted, endorsed, or otherwise executed as the case may be, by such person or persons and in such manner as the Directors shall from time to time by resolution determine.

50. The Company shall cause minutes to be entered in books kept for the purpose: -

(a) of all appointments of officers made by the Directors:

(b) of the names of the Directors present at each meeting of the Directors and of any committee of the Directors:

(c) of all resolutions and proceedings at all meetings of the Company and, of the Directors and of committees of the Directors.

POWERS OF ATTORNEY

51. The Company may empower any person, either generally or in respect of any specified matters, as its attorney, to execute deeds or do any other matter on its behalf in any place whether inside or outside the State. A deed signed by such attorney on behalf of the Company shall bind the Company and have the same effect as if it were under its common seal.

DISQUALIFICATION OF DIRECTORS

52. In addition to the circumstances set out in section 148(2) of the Act, the office of Director shall be vacated if a Director ceases to be qualified for the position of charity trustee under section 55 of the Charities Act, 2009.

ROTATION OF DIRECTORS

53. Subject to Article 54, a Director shall hold office for a term of three years and unless their office is vacated in accordance with Article 57 he or she shall retire at the third Annual General Meeting after their appointment. A Director shall in the normal course be eligible for reappointment for 2 further terms of office, whether consecutive or otherwise. However, in exceptional circumstances where the resignation of a Director who has served three terms would result in the Board having less than the minimum number of Directors required pursuant to Article 45 or if such a Director is deemed by the Board to be of such

significant value based on their qualifications, that Director may be re-elected for a further term PROVIDED THAT the Board shall at all times consist of a majority of Directors who have served less than 9 years.

54. The company, at the meeting at which a Director retires, may fill the vacated office by electing a person thereto, and in default the retiring Director shall, if offering himself or herself for re-election, be deemed to have been re-elected, unless at such meeting it is expressly resolved not to fill such vacated office, or unless a resolution for the re-election of such Director has been put to the meeting and lost.

55. No person other than a Director retiring at the meeting shall, unless recommended by the Directors, be eligible for election to the office of Director at any general meeting unless, not less than three nor more than twenty one days before the date appointed for the meeting, there has been left at the Company's registered office (a) notice in writing, signed by a member duly qualified to attend and vote at the meeting for which such notice is given, of their intention to propose such a person for election, and (b) notice in writing signed by the person concerned of their willingness to be elected.

56. The Company may from time to time by ordinary resolution increase or reduce the number of Directors and may also determine in what rotation the increased or reduced number is to go out of office.

57. The Company may by ordinary resolution of which extended notice has been given in accordance with section 146 of the Act remove any Director before the expiration of their period of office, notwithstanding anything in these articles or in any agreement between the Company and such director. Such removal shall be without prejudice to any claim such director may have for damages for breach of any contract of service between him and the Company.

58. The Company may by ordinary resolution appoint another person in place of a Director removed from office under Article 57. Without prejudice to the powers of the Directors under Article 59, the Company in general meeting may appoint any person to be a Director, either to fill a casual vacancy or as an additional Director.

59. The Directors may at any time appoint any person to be a Director of the Company, either to fill a casual vacancy or as an addition to the existing Directors, but so that the total number of Directors of the Company shall not at any time exceed the number, if any, provided for in these Articles. Any Director so appointed shall hold office only until the next annual general meeting, and, subject to Articles 53-54, shall then be eligible for re-election.

PROCEEDINGS OF DIRECTORS

60. The Directors may meet together for the dispatch of business, adjourn, and otherwise regulate their meetings as they think fit. Questions arising at any meeting shall be decided by a majority of votes. In case of equality of votes the chairperson shall have a second or casting vote. A Director may, and the Secretary on the requisition of a Director shall, at any time summon a meeting of the Directors. If the Directors so resolve it shall not be necessary to give notice of a meeting of Directors to any Director who, being resident in the State, is for the time being absent from the State.

DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

70. On their appointment and thereafter where any change occurs, each Director shall furnish to the Company Secretary full particulars of their interests which shall include their employment, all business interests and community involvement, including voluntary work for charities (hereinafter referred to as "Interests") which might involve a conflict of interest or might materially influence the Director in relation to the performance of their functions as a member of the Board or their partiality.

71. Nothing herein contained shall prevent the Directors from voting on (and being counted in the quorum at any meeting to pass) a resolution to purchase Directors' and Officers' Liability Insurance against any liability referred to in section 235 of the Act for any Director or officer, past or present, of the Company.

CHAIRPERSON AND VICE-CHAIRPERSON

72. (i) The Directors shall elect from among their number a Chairperson of their meetings and determine the period for which he or she is to hold office, but if at any meeting the Chairperson or the Vice-chairperson is not present within five minutes after the time appointed for holding the same, the Directors present may choose one of their number to chair their meeting.

(ii) The Chairperson shall be a Deaf person.

(iii) The Directors shall elect from among their number a Vice-Chairperson, who shall also be a Deaf person, whose role will be to deputise for the Chairperson

THE CHAIRPERSON'S DUTIES

73. The duties and responsibilities of the Chairperson shall include (but not be limited to):

(i) overseeing the governance and performance of the Company, setting the agenda for meetings, and facilitating the effective contribution of other Directors:

(ii) in conjunction with the other Directors, ensuring that there are appropriate strategies in place to implement the policies of the Company; and

(iii) chairing meetings of the Board of Directors and ensuring that the Board functions effectively and efficiently.

74. In the event of an equality of votes, the Chairperson shall have a second or casting vote.

SECRETARY

75. The Secretary shall be appointed by the Directors for such term and at such remuneration and upon such conditions as they may think fit; and any Secretary so appointed may be removed by them.

76. A provision of the Act or these Articles requiring or authorising a thing to be done by or to a Director and the Secretary shall not be satisfied by its being done by or to the same person acting both as Director and as, or in place of, the Secretary.

SEAL

77. The seal shall be used only by the authority of the Directors or of a committee of Directors authorised by the Directors in that behalf, and every instrument to which the seal shall be affixed shall be

(a) signed by a Director of it or by some other person appointed for the purpose by its Directors or by a foregoing committee of them; and

(b) be countersigned by the Secretary or by a second Director of it or by some other person appointed for the purpose by its Directors or by a foregoing committee of them.

ACCOUNTS

78. The Directors shall cause adequate accounting records to be kept. Adequate accounting records shall be deemed to have been maintained if they comply with Section 282(1) to 282(3) of the Act and explain the Company's transactions and facilitate the preparation of financial statements that give a true and fair view of the assets, liabilities, financial position and profit or loss of the Company.

79. The accounting records shall be kept at the registered office or, subject to Section 283 of the Act, at such other place as the Directors think fit, and shall at all reasonable times be open to the inspection of the officers of the Company and by other persons entitled pursuant to the Act.

80. The Directors shall from time to time determine whether and to what extent and at what times and places and under what conditions or regulations the financial statements and accounting records of the Company or any of them shall be open to the inspection of its members not being Directors. No member (not being a Director) shall have any right of inspecting any financial statement or accounting record of the Company except as conferred by statute, this Constitution or authorised by the Directors or by the Company in general meeting.

81. The Directors shall in accordance with the Act cause to be prepared and to be laid before the annual general meeting of the Company the statutory financial statements of the Company, the Directors' report in relation to it and the statutory auditor's report on those financial statements and Directors' report as are required by the Act to be prepared and laid before the annual general meeting of the Company.

82. A copy of the statutory financial statements of the Company, the Directors' report in relation to it and that statutory auditor's report on those financial statements and Directors' report shall, not less than twenty-one days before the date of the annual general meeting, be sent to every person entitled under Section 338(1) of the Act to receive them.

AUDIT

83. Auditors shall be appointed, and their duties regulated in accordance with Chapters 18 and 19 of Part 6 of the Act.

NOTICES

84. A notice may be given by the Company to any member either personally or by sending it by post in a prepaid letter or by electronic means (as defined in section 2(1) of the Act) to the member at their registered address or email address (or, if not so registered, then to the address or email address of the member last known to the Company). Section 218(5) of the Act shall apply.

85. Without prejudice to Articles 84 and 24 of these Articles, a notice shall be deemed to have been served or given:

(b) in the case of it being delivered personally, at the time it is delivered or left;

(c) in the case of its being posted (to an address in the State) on any day other than a Friday, Saturday or Sunday, 24 hours after despatch and in the case of its being posted (to such an address) –

(i) on a Friday – 72 hours after despatch; or

(ii) on a Saturday or Sunday – 48 hours after despatch; or

(d) in the case of electronic means being used in relation to it, 12 hours after despatch

Appendix 13. FET Programme Development Checklist

Irish Deaf Society FET Programme Development Checklist Template

[Insert Programme Title and Level]

This checklist has been developed by FET to facilitate and support programme teams in course planning, ensure alignment with organisational strategy, goals, standards, principles and criteria for Blended and Fully online programmes.

It will ensure that programmes at **[insert level of programme**] are fit for purpose before presenting to Quality Assurance Committee (QAC)

The Programme Team is required to review each section of the following checklist and confirm that the content of the programme module complies with the QQI approval certificate for the relevant programme.

Criteria		**Yes/No**
Programme title	The programme title: • reflects the field of learning • reflects the level of the award and the award type	
Programme Profile	The programme profile refers to: • Purpose/aim of the programme • Intake per annum • Minimum/Maximum Learner per intake • Delivery mode i.e. part time/full time • Duration of programme • Delivery methodology i.e. on-line/blended • Qualification programme leads to • Overall number of modules in programme • Progression opportunities • Transfer opportunities	
Learner Profile	The learner profile should refer to: • Target group of learners • Indicate Academic attainment of the learner • Indicate Experience attainment of the learner • Indicate Skills attainment of the learner • Indicate physical resource requirements	
Programme Objectives	The programme objectives should:	

	• Include statements of what the programme will achieve (Learning Outcomes) • Measurable, achievable and realistic curriculum and assessment • Appropriate to needs of learner • Reflects the award standard (NFQ)	
Entry Criteria	• The entry criteria for accessing, transferring or progress to this programme includes: • • Minimum entry requirements to ensure that the learner has a realistic chance of achieving the programme • Required for completion of the programme • Reflect the QQI standard and content of the award • Clarity on transfer and progression requirements	
Programme duration	The programme duration should: • Ensure that content and assessment are deliverable • Provide clarity on delivery mode – part time/full time • Provide clarity on module duration • Provide clarity on frequency/time i.e. weekly/evening • Provides clarity on learner effort – for synchronous and asynchronous learning	
Delivery mode	The delivery mode: • Informs whether programme is part time or full time • Is delivered daily/weekly etc	
Deliver methodologies	• Delivery methodologies: • On-line and/or blended learning • Location of blended/on-site • If synchronous and/or asynchronous opportunities • Teaching and learning modalities (self-directed/lectures/group/one-to-one etc) •	
Staff profiles	Staff profiles include: • Appropriate learner/teacher ratio	

	• Qualifications and experience of relevant staff	
Programme structure	The programme structure identifies: • The modules that are required to be completed to achieve award	
Programme review schedule	• Regular check-in per term to respond to curriculum analysis, outcomes, and completion data, and feedback from learners and teaching staff. • Annual Programme Review and recommendations for improvements and continuation.	
Transfer & progression	• Identify opportunities for transfer to other programmes at the same level (with IDS or another provider if applicable) • Identify opportunities for progression to other programmes at higher levels (with IDS or another provider)	
Learner support and resources	Learner support and resources are: • • Available to all learners – online & bended learning • Supports to learners for completion of programme suitable to learners for completing assessments • Supports to learners for achievement of award • Accessible Resources • Learning materials and resources road test with sample learners	
Assessment	Information on assessment will provide clarity on: • Assessment schedule • Assessment plan • The QA process, internal verification/external authentication • Accommodation for learner with special needs	

The completed checklist should accompany the draft comprehensive programme document.

Signed: **Signed:**

______________________________ ______________________________

FET Manager **Quality Assurance Manager**

Date: ________________________ **Date:** ________________________

Appendix 14 Document control

Document Title	IDS FET Quality Assurance Policy
Author(s)	Quality Assurance Manager
Version 1	IDS FET Quality Assurance December 2022
Approval by and Date (internally)	Quality Assurance Committee 8/12/22
Version 2	IDS FET Quality Assurance June 2025
Approval by and Date (internally)	Quality Assurance Committee 30/06/2025